

BOROUGH OF DARWEN





Darwin Central School

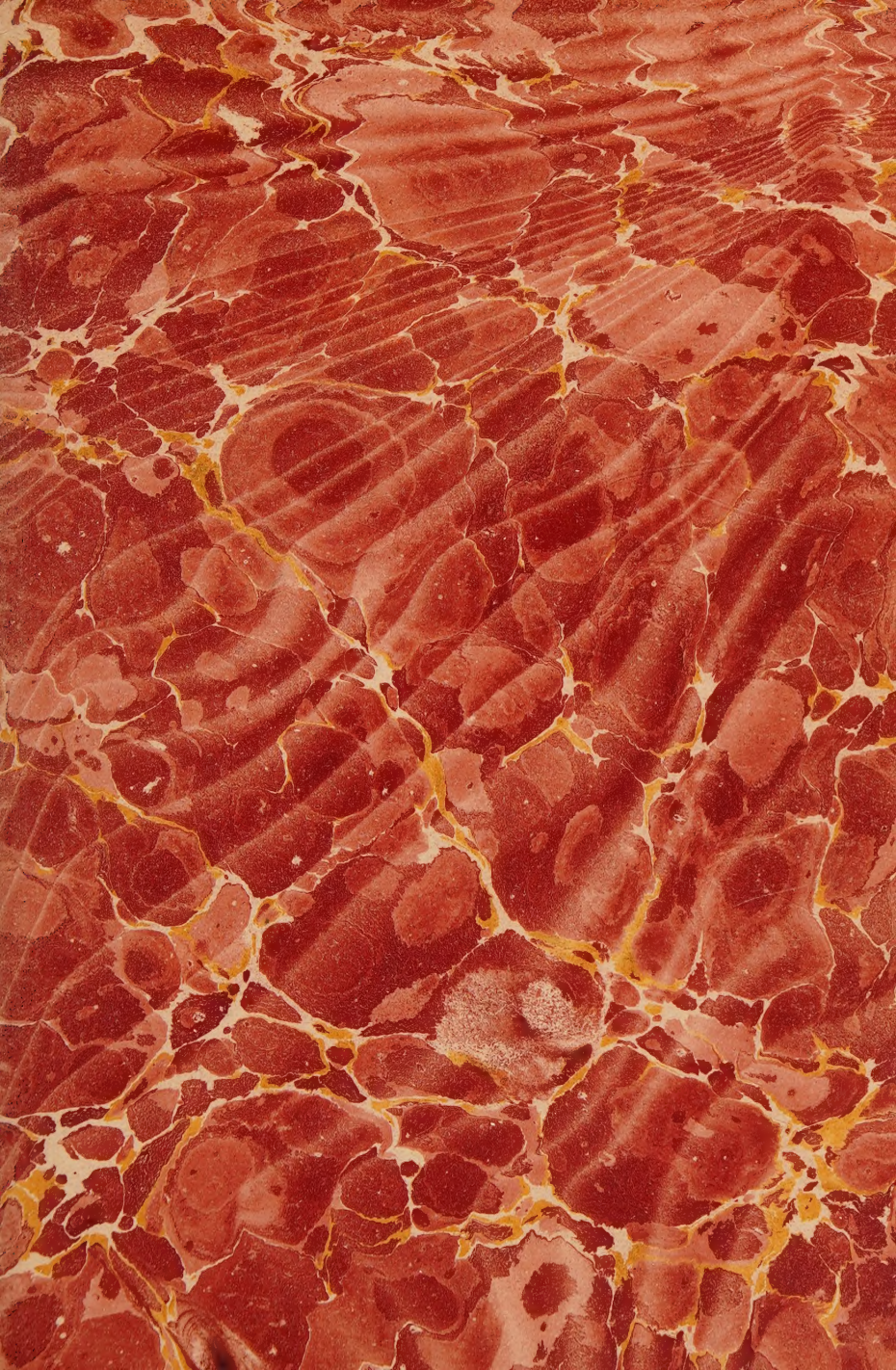
Hindle Foundation Prize

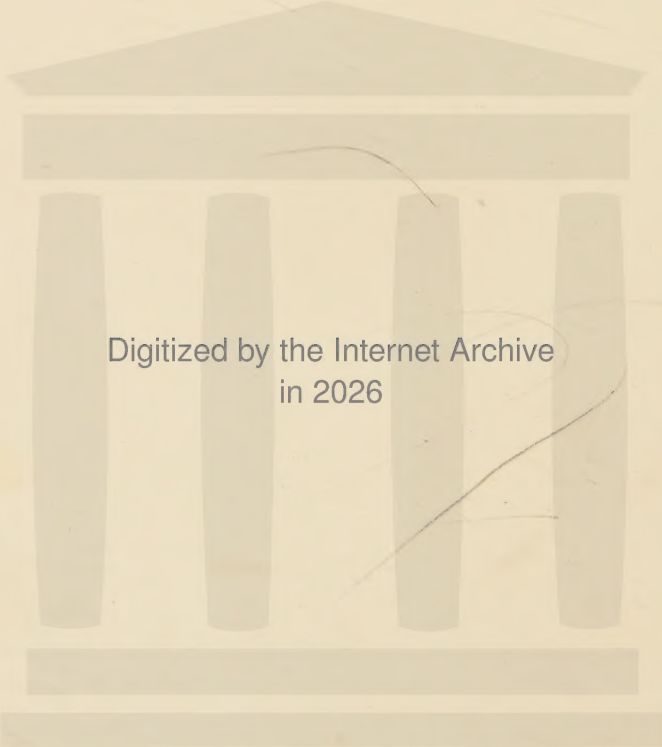
Awarded to James West
for General Excellence

Form III

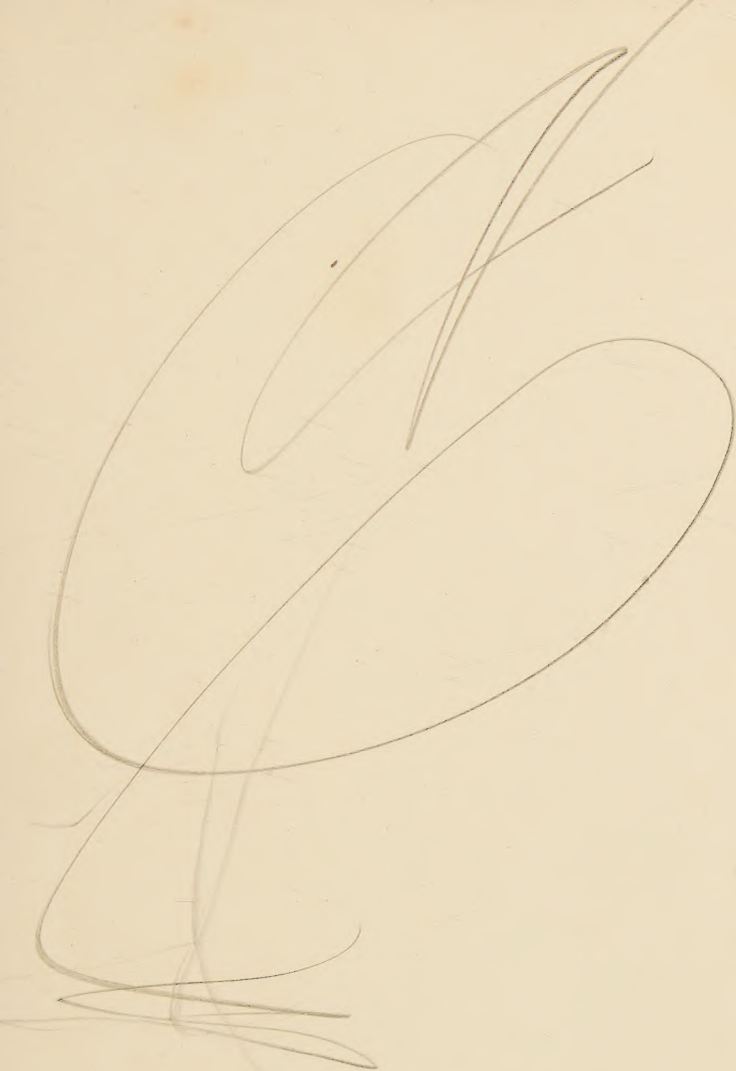
Year 1929

W. Lythgoe Headmaster.





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026





MOSQUES IN CAIRO

Photo Donald McLeish

Fr.

THE BOOK OF OTHER LANDS

BY
DOROTHY MARGARET STUART

AUTHOR OF
"THE BOY THROUGH THE AGES" "HISTORICAL SONGS
AND BALLADS" ETC.

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS
IN COLOUR AND BLACK AND WHITE



GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY LTD.
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

First published September 1926
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2
Reprinted July 1927

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. CHINA : THE LAND OF THE DRAGON	11
II. JAPAN : THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN	37
III. INDIA	56
IV. PERSIA	77
V. EGYPT AND PALESTINE	93
VI. GREECE AND TURKEY	113
VII. FRANCE	136
VIII. ITALY	159
IX. SPAIN	197
X. SWITZERLAND	218
XI. HOLLAND AND BELGIUM	237
XII. SCANDINAVIA	259
XIII. ESKIMO-LAND	275
XIV. SOUTH SEA ISLANDS	287

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
MOSQUES IN CAIRO	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A TYPICAL MANDARIN	15
A WEDDING PROCESSION	17
BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM	18
A SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS PUPIL	24
A SHADOW THEATRE	27
HONG KONG SEEN FROM ACROSS THE HARBOUR	32
PHYSIC STREET, CANTON	33
A CART IN PEKING	35
FLYING FISH-KITES	39
JAPANESE GIRL WITH HER DOLL	40
A ' KAGO ' OR TRAVELLING-CHAIR	41
IRRIGATION WHEEL	46
AT A BUDDHIST SHRINE	48
PLOUGHING A RICE-FIELD WITH A WATER-BUFFALO	48
THE GARDEN OF PRINCE HOTHŌ AT TOKIO	49
THE GREAT BRONZE BUDDHA AT KAMAKURA	49
ACTOR GARBED AS A SAMURAI	51
A TOY-SHOP	54
A HINDU BRASS-WORKER OF BENARES	57
TELEGU DRUMMER	58
HINDU TEMPLE AT BIJAPUR	62
NATIVE WEAVERS IN NEPAL	64
A BOOKSELLER'S STALL IN A LUCKNOW BAZAAR	65
A BOY PRINCE OF INDIA	65
NATIVES SPINNING COTTON	70
THE BUDDHA-LA OF LHASA	73
A GATE OF TEHERAN	78
PERSIAN HORSE CONVOY	79
THE MOSQUE AT KERMANSHAH	80
PERSIAN NATIONAL COSTUME	80

Book of Other Lands

	PAGE
ROCK CARVINGS AT BISITUN	81
PERSIAN GIRL IN NATIONAL DRESS	85
PERSIAN BOYS	87
GIRLS WEAVING PERSIAN CARPETS	91
A SWEET-WATER SELLER, CAIRO	96
PLOUGHING WITH CAMELS ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE	97
A PRIMITIVE THRESHING-MACHINE	98
A STREET SCENE IN CAIRO	98
A GIRLS' SCHOOL AT CAIRO	99
ONE OF THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON	100
THE MOSQUE OF OMAR	105
CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE	106
MONK OF THE MONASTERY OF MAR-SABA	107
A BOY OF PALESTINE	108
AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF DENDERA	110
THE 'STREET WHICH IS CALLED STRAIGHT' AT DAMASCUS	111
THE PARTHENON, FROM THE WEST	114
TYPICAL BOOTBLACKS	116
A PEASANT BOY BRINGING GREENSTUFF TO MARKET	117
PEASANT WOMAN WINDING WOOL	120
ADRIANOPLE GATE, CONSTANTINOPLE	130
A STREET VENDOR OF ORANGES	132
PERA AND GALATA VIEWED FROM THE BOSPHORUS	132
A VENDOR OF MELONS	133
A WHIRLING DERVISH	134
ROUEN CATHEDRAL, WEST FRONT	139
PARIS FROM THE TOP OF NOTRE DAME	140
DEVASTATED RHEIMS	141
A BRETON BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM	141
A BRETON VENDOR OF IMAGES	144
A WAYSIDE SHRINE TO JEANNE D'ARC	144
WASHING-DAY BY THE RIVER AT TOUL	145
CLOWN AND TAMBOURINE CAR IN CARNIVAL AT NICE	151
THE CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES, ON THE LOIRE	152
THE PONT DU GARD	154
A PARDON IN BRITANNY	154
PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE IN THE DAUPHINY ALPS	156
ST PETER'S AT ROME	160

Illustrations

	PAGE
ROME FROM THE DOME OF ST PETER'S	161
PEASANT GIRL OF STRONA VALLEY	168
PILLOW-LACE WORKER AT BURANO, NEAR VENICE	169
A BOY OF ROME	170
WASHING-DAY ON LAKE MAGGIORE	186
A VENETIAN WATER-SHRINE	188
A METAL-WARE SHOP IN NORTH ITALY	192
ST MARIA DELLA SALUTE, VENICE	192
A SHRINE IN AOSTA CATHEDRAL	193
THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS	195
THE BRIDGE OF ALCANTARA	198
A PRIEST IN RICH VESTMENTS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY	200
A GROUP FROM A RELIGIOUS PROCESSION	204
A TOREADOR	205
THE GIRALDA, SEVILLE	207
A STREET SCENE IN TOLEDO	208
A BULL-FIGHT IN SEVILLE	209
CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN DEL PUERTA, MADRID	212
THE MONASTERY AT MONTSERRAT	217
BOY AND GIRL, BERNESE OBERLAND	220
ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE	222
CHURCH OF ST COLUMBA, ANDERMATT	226
AN ALPINE PASTURE ABOVE ZERMATT	226
A SWISS PEASANT AND HER GOAT	227
THE TRAGEDY OF THE MATTERHORN	229
OX-CART IN THE ENGADINE	231
THE PRIOR OF ST BERNARD'S HOSPICE AND DOG	232
THE MATTERHORN	232
JUMPING A CREVASSE IN THE ALPS	233
THE CASTLE OF CHILLON	234
A WOMAN OF HINDELOOPEN	238
AMSTERDAM FROM THE AIR	239
A GIRL OF ARNEMUIDEN	239
FISHERMEN OF THE ZUIDER ZEE	240
AN OLD FORTIFIED GATEWAY IN MAASTRICHT	242
A GIRLS' SCHOOL IN HOLLAND	244
THE GRANDE PLACE, BRUSSELS	245
A LITTLE GIRL OF MARKEN	246

Book of Other Lands

	PAGE
A MILK CART	248
THE BELFRY, BRUGES	251
ST URSULA'S SHRINE	253
POLICE OFFICER AND HIS TRAINED DOG	255
THE CHÂTEAU DE WALZIN, ON THE MEUSE	256
BRUGES	256
RUINED YPRES	257
A MAIDEN OF RATTRICK	260
A VILLAGE SCHOOL IN SWEDEN	262
HOUSE OF A SWEDISH GENTLEMAN	262
A COMMUNION SERVICE IN NORWAY	264
TIMBERED HOUSE IN TELEMAR, NORWAY	265
NATIONAL CART OF NORWAY	267
AN ELK	268
A FERRY ON THE NAERO FJORD	272
A NORWEGIAN CHRISTENING	273
A CARIBOU, OR REINDEER	276
AN ESKIMO	277
BUILDING A SNOW-HOUSE	278
ESKIMO DOG	279
AN ESKIMO GIRL	280
FISHING FOR SMALL COD THROUGH A HOLE IN THE ICE	282
A TYPICAL ESKIMO FAMILY	283
SLEDGE AND DOGS	283
AN ESKIMO IN HOLIDAY DRESS	285
HOUSE OF A WEALTHY SAMOAN	289
A FIJIAN NATIVE DANCER	290
A NATIVE HOME AT TAHITI	292
NATIVES OF SAMOA PREPARING FOR A FEAST	293
SAMOAN GIRLS MAKING KAVA	294
A WOMAN CHIEF OF SAMOA	295
NATIVE SAMOAN WOMAN AND CHILD	297
THE GRAVE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON	298

THE BOOK OF OTHER LANDS

CHAPTER I

CHINA : THE LAND OF THE DRAGON

TO every one who has ever seen an old-fashioned Chinese postage-stamp, or a Chinese vase, or a piece of Chinese embroidery, the great, sprawling, grinning Chinese dragon is as familiar a figure as the American eagle or the British lion. And in China itself this fearsome beast is to be met with everywhere, on the roofs of houses, in the gardens of temples, on paper lanterns, porcelain tea-cups, and bells and gongs of bronze. If there be any truth in the description of the dragon written by a Chinese sage it would be anything but a pleasant creature to come across, even if it were fast asleep. It has, he tells us, the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, the neck of a serpent, the scales of a carp, the paws of a tiger ; on either side of its mouth are huge whiskers, and the curling vapour from its nostrils changes sometimes into rain and sometimes into fire. Its voice is "like the beating of a gong."

Before the year 1912, when China became a Republic, the emperor used himself to be described as a Dragon ; his hands were called the Dragon's claws, his throne the Dragon's chair ; and when a Chinese emperor died his polite and regretful subjects said that he had "ascended on a dragon to be the Guest of Heaven."

Legends and fairy-tales about these weird monsters are found all over the world, and not only in the Far East. Every one will think at once of St George : and then there was the dragon who guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides in the Greek story, and the dragon which the Norse pirates regarded as a mascot, and placed as a figurehead on the prows of their

Book of Other Lands

ships. Some learned people believe that these legends are lingering echoes of the far-off days when huge, lizard-like creatures really *did* exist in the plains of Central Asia—*Saurians* they are called in scientific language, and many Chinese believe that they exist even now, though nobody is bold enough to declare that he himself has *seen* one. So numerous are the pictures and images of the beast in China and Japan that the children are no more afraid of them than they would be of the picture of a big dog. In the temple courts you will see little yellow-coloured boys playing merrily under the bristling shadows of the sacred dragons, and even lying down to take a little nap between their huge, sharp paws.

China, then, is the Land of the Dragon, a vast, ancient, and very wonderful land. In spite of the rapid changes which have marked the last fourteen or fifteen years, in spite of the spread of Western ideas and the introduction of Western machinery, it remains one of the most quaint and curious countries in the whole world, a country where, at every turn, a traveller from the West would see something to amuse or astonish him.

For many hundreds of years the only way in which such a traveller could reach the mysterious Empire of Cathay, as it was called, would be by sea. To the north and west of the country lie the fierce, perilous peaks of Thibet and the dreary deserts of Mongolia, regions that have only recently been explored by white men. But, after all, it is much more exciting to approach a strange country from the sea than in an unromantic railway train by land, and there could be no more picturesque first impression of China than the vision of a Chinese harbour, with its low, flat houses roofed with glittering tiles and its waters dotted with queer-looking craft, chiefly junks and sampans. It has been said that there are more boats to be found in China than in all the rest of the world put together, and it is hardly surprising that this should be so, for it has not only a very long sea-coast, but many great rivers, lakes, and artificial canals. The junk is the favourite type of boat for sea-going Chinamen, and an odd-looking one it is, with its flat bottom, high stern, square bows, and sails made of straw matting. The Chinese were the first nation to discover

China

the use of the mariners' compass, and, with its aid, they made daring voyages on their awkward, unwieldy junks, in the glorious days of their history, faring as far afield as Java, India, Ceylon, the Gulf of Persia, and the coast of Arabia.

Before he launches his boat for a voyage a pious Chinese boatman will let off rockéts, and, after sacrificing a chicken, stick up three slips of paper stained with its blood in front of the cabin. An outward-bound junk is a lovely sight, with her sails of golden-coloured matting, of every shade from saffron to flame ; but if she meet with rough weather, or if, as her master would say, " the bob-tailed dragon is about," she may return in a sad plight, with her straw-woven wings tattered and stained. The sampan is a much lighter boat, usually propelled by a single oar at the stern, and able to dart to and fro with wonderful nimbleness among the bigger craft lying at anchor in deep water.

The first thing that would impress you about a typical Chinese town might be either the lowness of the buildings or the narrowness of the streets. All the roofs are sharply peaked and pointed, and the reason for this is curious. The Chinaman is a firm believer in wicked spirits, but he also believes that even the most wicked and the most powerful of them cannot get round a corner ! So he makes his roof full of corners, for the confusion and bafflement of any evil sprites that may happen to be hovering round. Another interesting thing about the Chinese roof is its resemblance to a tent. Many thousands of years ago the land was overrun by great hordes from the deserts to the north ; wild, wandering tribes who swept down upon the rich plains of China, settled there, and were the ancestors of the people who live there now. These tribes were what are called *nomads* ; that is to say, they did not live in houses or villages, or settle in one spot, but moved about from place to place, dwelling in tents like the Jews of old and the Arabs in our own time. When, after they had taken possession of China, these Mongolians *did* begin to build, they seem to have been haunted by the remembrance of their movable homes, and so they gave to their houses the form of a tent—not a bell-tent, like you see in Boy Scouts' camps or at

Book of Other Lands

Army manœuvres, but the higher kind of tent, with a square, steeply slanting roof, which could shelter a whole family.

Presently we will pay an imaginary visit to several different Chinese towns, and notice in what way they differ from each other. But first of all we may pause to notice some features common to almost all of them. Though very few really ancient temples or palaces remain in the land, there are many very ancient walls—walls built round cities, and walls built as a barrier against invasion. Most famous of these is the Great Wall of China, which measures, if you include all its windings, about 1500 miles from end to end, and was begun in the third century before Christ. It is from twenty to thirty feet high, and every two hundred yards stands a forty-foot tower ; at the base it is from fifteen to twenty-five feet thick. This wonderful wall is carried through valleys and over mountains, like the much smaller and less wonderful Roman wall built by Hadrian to keep the Picts out of Roman Britain ; in some places it climbs over lonely crags 4000 feet above the sea-level. They were enthusiastic wall-builders, those Chinese of the olden times. The old name of the city of An-king was “ I,” which means “ Ought-to-be,” and was given to the place because a famous Chinese general went there before it was built at all, and, halting, exclaimed aloud, “ *There ought to be* a fortified city here ! ”

The narrowness of the streets in Chinese towns is made to appear greater than it actually is by the tremendous number of signs hanging outside the dark, mysterious-looking, queerly scented shops. These signs will be gaily painted, sometimes in black on scarlet, or gold on black, or scarlet on pale blue, and they will tell you—if you happen to be able to read them—what may be bought within.

The crowd coming and going between these dangling strips of brilliant colour will be a constant delight to a visitor from the West. Even now, when many Chinamen have taken to wearing European clothes—which, by the way, do not suit them at all—there are many picturesque varieties of costume to be seen. The poorer people wear blue cotton, and huge straw hats which serve to keep off the sun or the rain, as the

China

case may be. In winter the richer citizens look enormously fat, and get fatter outwardly every day that the cold weather lasts. This is because instead of warming themselves with closed-in stoves or cosy open fires they protect themselves against the frost with more and more, and thicker and, thicker, padded garments. To these the *very* rich will add coats of beautiful dark sables, the most costly furs in the world. They will speak of a three-, four-, or six-coat-cold day.

Until quite recently you would not see any ladies or little girls in the streets, and those that you see *now* will not, as a rule, be wearing native dress. The very fact that they *are* seen means that they have exchanged Eastern for Western ideas, and no longer lead that life of strict seclusion which a well-to-do Chinaman once thought the best possible life for his wife and daughters to lead.

There could be no more comfortable or dignified dress than the Chinese dress which is now being gradually abandoned in the centres where European influence is strong. It consists of a long, loose outer jacket, and equally long and loose trousers, made in summer of silk, in winter of padded cotton. Violent contrasts of colour are not admired, and purple and deep blue are favourite colours. The thick-soled boots are usually of black satin. At his girdle a Chinaman will carry his fan, opium-pipe, snuff-box, watch, and the chop-sticks with which he so deftly supplies the place of knife and fork. Horn spectacles, with moon-like lenses, may give him a sage and learned air. And the nails on some of his fingers may have been allowed to reach a length of two inches or more. If he is a mandarin he may wear a long necklace of beads, ivory,



A TYPICAL MANDARIN

Book of Other Lands

amber, or jade, and at one time a glance at the button on his turned-up round cap would tell you to which grade or rank of mandarins he belonged.

One characteristic item in the appearance of a Chinaman has vanished, regretted by no one—and that is the queue, or pig-tail, which you will now see only on tea-cups, or embroideries, or painted fans and screens. When, in the seventeenth century, China was invaded and conquered by the Manchus, or Manchurians, the invaders issued an edict that every man and boy among their subjects should shave the whole of his head except a small spot on the crown, from which a long twist of hair was to be allowed to hang. This quaint custom did not disappear until the dawn of the present century. Chinamen had almost forgotten that it was really a badge of servitude, and had come to take such a pride in the length and thickness of their pigtails that if their own hair did not satisfy them they added a little more to it !

If, in a Chinese street, you saw a sort of Sedan-chair called a palanquin, a gorgeous thing with lacquered panels, scarlet tassels and bamboo poles, being borne along by blue-clad coolies, you would guess that there was a Chinese lady inside, and, as a rule, you would not be wrong. The dress of a Chinese lady of high degree is not very different from that of her husband, and consists, like his, of long trousers and a loose jacket. According to Chinese ideas, it is most unladylike *not* to wear trousers ! The jacket of a mandarin's wife may be rather gayer than his, and embroidered with designs in beautifully blended colours—designs where our old friend the dragon is often to be found, stretching and twisting his scaly form on the fine, tough silk.

At one time *all* Chinese women of the upper rank thought it necessary to paint their faces until they looked like stiff, bright masks : they would dabble their lips with scarlet, and if the curve of their eyebrows did not please them they would pull out the hairs and make new and more elegantly drawn brows with the aid of a stick of black paint. Another, and even more curious, custom which has only lately ceased to prevail, was the binding of the girls' feet until they were reduced from their

China

natural size to pitiful deformed stumps not more than three or four inches long. Upon these stumps the unfortunate Chinese ladies had to totter about as best they could. It is hardly surprising to know that many of them gave up walking altogether, and preferred to sit still, or to be carried about in what English children call a 'dandy-chair,' made of the clasped hands of two obliging people.

The headdress of a Chinese lady is very elaborate, and on state occasions may be decked with jade butterflies, or a sort



A WEDDING PROCESSION

of mosaic made from the vivid blue feathers of the kingfisher mingled with small pearls. It must be remembered that all the customs here described are *still* faithfully followed in China by *thousands* of old-fashioned families, and that the past tense is used only to indicate that the observance of them is no longer universal, and is discouraged by the progressive and up-to-date younger generation.

If the palanquin that you see passing along a Chinese street is entirely covered with scarlet, and if it is the centre of a small procession of men bearing scarlet boxes, you may be sure that a bride is on her way to the house of the bridegroom, whom she has never seen. She is escorted by one of his friends, whose part is the same as that of the 'best man' in a Western wedding, and the scarlet boxes contain her trousseau. The bridegroom

Book of Other Lands

will probably be very young—far too young, according to European ideas, to take upon himself the responsibilities of the head of a household. Only, in China, the newly married couple do not set up a house of their own, but quarters are set apart for them in the house of the bridegroom's father.

The little bride has to be very obedient to her mother-in-law and—if she has one—her grandmother-in-law, and she must burn incense to the spirits of her husband's ancestors



BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM WEARING SPECIAL GARMENTS
BORROWED FOR THE OCCASION

now as if they were her own. Ancestor-worship is the strongest element in the native religion of China, and a man is looked upon as a terrible fellow, an outcast from society, who is lacking in pious respect for his forbears, both the living and the dead. There is no country in the world where it is more important for a boy to behave well, for if he does *all* his ancestors share in the credit, while if he is a naughty boy, or grows up into a bad character, *all* his ancestors are besmirched by his guilt. Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, declared that every virtue had its source in politeness. Perhaps he was not very far wrong, for it is certainly impolite

China

to rob and slay, and to bear false witness against your neighbour. The trembling girl-bride has at least the consolation of knowing beforehand that her husband will be courteous and well-bred, and carefully schooled in all those little social graces which the Chinese consider so important !

The cult of ancestor-worship makes every Chinaman who follows it feel very anxious to have a son of his own, but, fortunately for the peace of mind of pious people who have none, an adopted child is regarded as quite equal to the task of worshipping the ancestors of the family into which he has been received. According to the religion of the ancient Chinese, Taoism, each man has three souls, of which one is supposed to be fixed and held in the votive tablet, commemorating his virtues, which his eldest son sets up after his death. His children wear *white* garments as a sign of mourning for at least two years, burn incense to his shade, and, at his funeral, are careful to provide him with paper models of everything which he may require on his journey to the Land of Spirits. These paper objects, money, carriages, men- and maid-servants, etc., are solemnly burned over the dead man's grave, where a white cock, supposed to contain the second of his three souls, is either slain at the grave-side, or made to bow there three times by each member of the bereaved family.

Sons play such an important part in the ceremonies considered necessary to ensure happiness in the next world that, naturally, the birth of a baby boy is hailed with greater enthusiasm than that of his sisters ; but it is a mistake, and one which annoys enlightened Chinamen very much, to imagine that thousands of baby girls are drowned every year, or left to die of exposure outside the city wall. It is only among the very, very poor that this gruesome custom has ever been practised ; but in times of famine it does seem to have been practised rather extensively in some districts, notably in Foochow, where a stone was set up near a pool, bearing the inscription " Girls may not be drowned here."

When a tiny Chinaman of the well-to-do class is born, his first garments are not specially made to fit him, as are those of babies in Western lands, but consist of heavy wrappings

Book of Other Lands

fashioned out of the coat and trousers of some aged man at least seventy years old ! It is believed that in some mysterious way the wearing of such clothes will ensure an equally long life to the new-born child. When he is a month old his head is shaved, and a feast is held in honour of the occasion. Soon his nurse begins to teach him nursery rhymes and baby games. She shows him how to join his forefingers to make two little birds kissing, then, as he slowly separates his hands and raises and spreads out his arms, she says : " And now the birds have gone to the high hills to eat white rice ! "

A nursery rhyme sung to babies in the Kwei-chow district runs like this :

Sleep is drawing near :
It tells me to doff my embroidered shoes.
" Lie down ! " says the matting on the bed :
" Cover yourself up," says the quilt :
" Sleep well, sleep quickly," adds the pillow.
I will. And I shall have some sweets to-morrow.

From his earliest years our little Chinese boy is taught to be very respectful to his elders, very quiet in his movements, and very silent under all circumstances. Noisy games are forbidden, but sometimes an indulgent father will go out and fly a huge gaily coloured paper kite with his sons, and enjoy the sport every whit as much as they. If the boy is punished he must never protest or answer back ; if he is punished for something he has not done, he may not try to explain or to excuse himself.

Among themselves the Chinese do not shake hands or kiss each other, but they *kow-tow*, or bow very low, and clasp and shake their *own* hands with great heartiness. They adorn their ordinary speech with all sorts of pretty phrases. A Chinaman, in alluding to a friend's daughter, for example, will not say " Your daughter," but, " your *chi'en chin* " (" your ten thousand ounces of silver.") In asking after his friend's father he will say, " Does the venerable severity enjoy good health ? " and should he desire to learn in what town a stranger lives, he puts the question in this way, " In what favoured spot do you, in your wisdom, deign to dwell ? "

The first and most important part of the small boy's educa-

China

tion consists in learning to keep his temper, to repress himself, and to offend against none of the many rules of etiquette by which his whole life is to be governed. At six years of age he goes to school, asks the aid of the Fox-god to speed him along the road of learning, and, after kow-towing to the image of Confucius, begins the labours of the day. Simple proverbs and short sentences are set to him, to learn by heart. Some of these proverbs are quite amusing ; for example :

A good drum does not need a heavy stick.

A blind cat catches none but dead mice.

It is useless to return a salted fish to the water.

A lazy man uses a long thread ; a foolish one, a bent needle.

The old-fashioned Chinese education consisted almost entirely of the close and prolonged study of the Chinese classics, poetry, philosophy, and the lives of bygone worthies. Grammar had no part in it, for Chinese is a non-grammatical language. The art of writing is alarmingly difficult, for it is done with fine brushes upon rice-paper, in long columns of elaborate characters, beginning from the right top of the page, and running downward from right to left. This means, of course, that in a Chinese book you would find the words " The End " where in a Western book you would see " Chapter One." We all know what Chinese writing looks like, how queer the angular, jagged, and peaked letters seem to our unaccustomed eyes. We can well understand how it happened that the people who had such a complicated alphabet were the first to discover the art of printing, which they practised with considerable skill long before Gutenberg and Caxton introduced it into Europe.

The Chinese characters represent sounds and ideas, but not *words* composed of *letters*. The principle is what is called 'pictographic,' or writing in pictures. Thus, the sign for a tree repeated twice means 'a forest'; the sign for the sun and that for the moon written together mean 'brightness'; a man and a woman together signify 'goodness' or 'happiness'; two women under one roof, 'strife'!

Europeans are often surprised and a little hurt when they are told that the Chinese regard them as barbarians. We are

Book of Other Lands

apt to forget that China was a highly civilized nation, with a magnificent literary culture, at a time when Europe was a rude, perplexed, and stormy continent, plunged in the deepest gloom of the Dark Ages. The Chinese are quite conscious of this fact. Their own name for their country is *Chung-Hwa*—‘Central Glory.’ And their childish imagination is fed with visions of the old-time splendours of *Chung-Hwa*.

The rules governing Chinese poetry are elaborate and severe, and are said to have been handed down unaltered for 2500 years. An educated Chinaman must be familiar with these rules, and able to compose verses in accordance with them, the composition of such verses being the chief task set before students who come up for examination, and who aspire to enter Government service. (Here, again, it must be borne in mind that the last few years have witnessed great changes ; but all *grown men* still living among the higher classes in China *must* have been educated on the lines here described, unless they belong to some non-Chinese religious sect.)

The centuries which were darkest in Europe seem to have been brightest in China, for many of their most renowned poets flourished in the seventh, eighth, and eleventh centuries of the Christian era. One of these, Meng Hao Jan by name (A.D. 689-740), was such a timid fellow that when the emperor came in person to pay him a complimentary visit he hastily hid himself under the bed ! Wang Wei, a friend of his, was, like many Chinese poets, a skilful landscape artist as well. When Wang Wei’s wife and mother died he was so heartbroken that he turned his mountain home into a Buddhist monastery, and spent the remainder of his days in lonely meditation.

The best-known, and one of the most popular, of the poets whose works the Chinese boy had to learn by heart, was Li-Po (A.D. 705-770). He lived at Cheng-tu, in a district where beautiful trees and flowers abound ; the mulberry and the eucalyptus, the peony, the hibiscus, the night-closing violet, and many varieties of rose. In his youth he and five kindred spirits formed a small literary club, called ‘The Six Idlers of the Bamboo Brook,’ but his later life seems to have been stormy and restless, and he exclaims in one of his poems :

China

How oft in danger and despair
Do hapless travellers roam,
By land and sea alike unsafe !
Why *don't* I stay at home !¹

Poor Li-Po was drowned one night, leaning over the side of a boat in a vain attempt to embrace the reflection of the moon on the water !

Another very brilliant poet of nearly a thousand years ago was Su T'ung-po. He excelled at the kind of short lyric in which the aim of the poet is to make the *idea* go on, after the *words* come to a halt. These poems are known as 'stop-shorts,' and they are still popular among the cultured Chinese, who find it very good sport to compose them.

Such, then, were the poets and the poems which the Chinese boy had to study in school. Whatever religion he belonged to, he was bound to begin each day's work by kow-towing to the image of Confucius, the wise and benign teacher who lived in the sixth century B.C. and set so much store by politeness. The two faiths which would be most likely to claim him would be either Taoism or Buddhism.

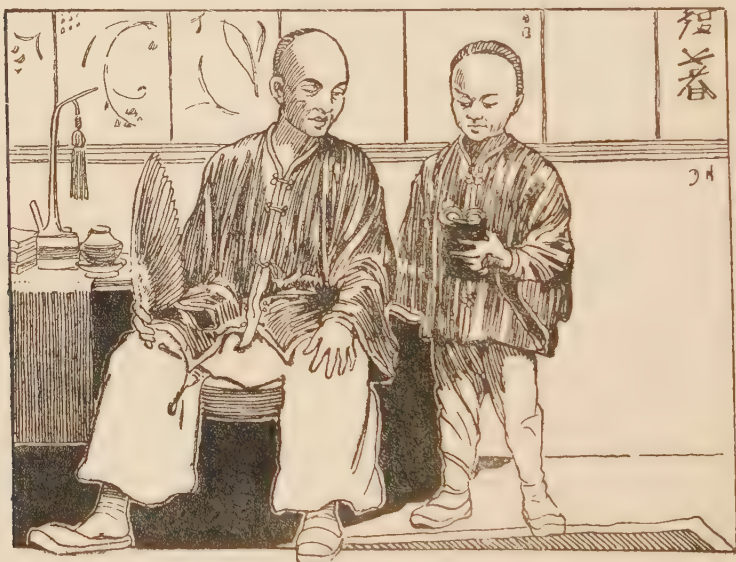
Taoism is an elaborate religion, full of ghosts and demons, enchantments and fairy-beasts. The word *Tao* means the Way, and the man whom the Chinese believe to have pointed out this one true Way lived, like Confucius, in the sixth century before Christ, and was called Lao-tze. Not very much is known about his career, but if there be any truth in the legends which gathered round his name he must have been a queer-looking fellow. We are told that he had unusually large ears, *two* bridges to his nose, and ten toes on each foot ! His contemporary, Confucius, founded a system of conduct rather than a religion, so it must be remembered that the boy who kow-tows to an image of the sage may be a good Taoist or a good Buddhist none the less.

The religion of Buddha, about which we shall hear more when we find ourselves in the land where its founder lived—India—reached China some two hundred years before Christ.

¹ Translated by Dr W. A. P. Martin.

Book of Other Lands

One legend says that the emperor of that time had a dream in which he beheld a Golden Man, and sent messengers far and wide to find the meaning of the vision ; and that at last the answer came from India that the Golden Man was none other than Buddha himself. Another legend relates that certain Buddhist monks arrived in Chung-Hwa, on a missionary journey, and were cast into prison by the indignant followers



A SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS PUPIL

of the many-toed Lao-tze ; and that they were delivered from their captivity by the Golden Man—Buddha—whose religion they had come to teach. Whatever the historical facts may be about the first coming of Buddhism to China, it is certain that by the fourth century of the Christian era the whole Land of the Dragon had been reached by the new religion, which to this day shares with Taoism the chief place in the affections of the people. It is curious, and perhaps a little sad, that China and not India should be the greatest Buddhistic country in the world, and that the faith of the gentle Buddha should have been gradually thrust out of the place where he lived and taught and

China

died, to survive mainly in other lands, such as China, Japan, Siam, Java, and the Malay States, which he had never beheld.

In China Buddhism has borrowed so many ceremonies from Taoism that it is said to be rather difficult for strangers to distinguish between the temples and temple-services of the two religions, which flourish peacefully side by side.

Our little Chinese boy, whom we left kow-towing before Confucius, is then, most probably, a follower either of Buddha or of Lao-tze. If, as is not impossible, he is a Christian, he will refuse to bow his head to any image. There are many Christians among the Chinese, and there have been many Christian missionaries since the far-off days when a little band of Nestorians came from Persia and founded a Christian community which prospered so well that it seemed for a time as if Christianity might become the national religion. When Marco Polo,¹ the great Venetian explorer, visited China in the thirteenth century he found the last shrinking remnants of this Christian sect still faithful after a lapse of more than five hundred years. It was in the sixteenth century that the two earliest Jesuit missionaries, Father Ruggiero and Father Ricci, were sent to China by the Pope. At the beginning of the twentieth century there are said to have been over a million Chinese Roman Catholics. The first Protestant missionary was Dr Robert Morrison, who arrived at the scene of his labours in 1807, and who tackled and completed the gigantic task of translating the entire Bible into Chinese. Since that time Protestant missions have multiplied, and Protestant colleges, hospitals, and orphanages have sprung up all over the Land of the Dragon. In these good works a foremost part has been played by the American missionaries, one of whom, Dr Geil, followed the Great Wall of China from end to end, a pilgrimage of 1500 miles, early in the present century, and also visited and described every single one of the eighteen capitals of the Chinese Empire.

In addition to Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity there is one other great religion to which our Chinese schoolboy might *perhaps* belong, and that is Mohammedanism. In 755 the

¹ See *The Book of Discovery*, by T. C. Bridges, Chapter IV.

Book of Other Lands

Caliph Abu Giafar sent four thousand Mohammedan soldiers to suppress a rebellion in China, and the descendants of these men and their converts still hold fast to the faith of him whom they call *The Prophet*, and are allowed by the Chinese government to build mosques and worship Allah (God) in their own way.

Our Chinese schoolboy, studying the classical poets of old Cathay in a Chinese school, has no cricket or football to look forward to when lesson-hours are done. The most exciting games he may hope to play are kite-flying, battledore and shuttlecock, and dominoes. Green plums and peanuts are the 'treats' which he gives himself and his playfellows.

On his homeward way he may linger on the edge of a little crowd gathered round a Shadow Theatre. The puppets are worked by one man, in the same way as our old friends, Punch and Judy, and the 'theatre' is simply a wooden framework placed over the head and shoulders of the showman, who is draped to his ankles with a sort of curtain of blue cotton.

When the schoolboy reaches his home, the rambling, one-storied house where so many members of the same family live, he will not find what Western children would consider a cosy room or a tempting dinner there. But his ideas are different from theirs, and he sees nothing cheerless in the stiff, hard chairs, the rigid, flat beds (raised only about a foot from the floor), which are the chief furniture of the house, and nothing unpleasant in the queer dainties—smoked rats, sea-slug soup, sharks' fins, pickled fir-cones, rotten eggs and birds'-nest soup (this last made from the edible clay homes of a family of Asiatic swifts) which will be served with the rice which is the most important item in every Chinese meal. So universal is the use of rice that one Chinaman will often greet another with the words, "Have you eaten your rice?" much as we should say, "How are you this morning?"

Rice is cultivated in flat, marshy districts, and several varieties are known, some as low as one foot and some as lofty as six feet high. When ripe it may be white, golden, ruddy, or black. The soil in which it grows must be either naturally muddy or else kept so by artificial means, such as canals and water-wheels. The result is that the men and oxen working in the *paddy*-fields

China

('paddy' is rice in the husk) usually have to plod along knee-deep in ooze and mud. This is one of the most familiar sights of Chinese country life. It looks most uncomfortable; yet, oddly enough, the cultivators do not catch cold. Sneezes are seldom heard, and rheumatism is practically unknown.

All over China ideas about agriculture are very simple, and sometimes very quaint. Only the surface of the fields is



A SHADOW THEATRE

ploughed, and to improve the crops burnt-out rockets, feathers, and clippings from barbers' shops are scattered in the furrows.

Rice, then, is to our little Chinese boy what bread would be to a Westerner—the chief part of his diet. He also knows and appreciates the taste of roast chicken, roast pork, and roast duck. Of ducks the Chinese are especially fond, and on many rivers and lakes you may see what are called duck-boats. The owner of such a boat keeps a large family of ducks on board, and once or twice a day he throws a plank ashore, and the birds march along it, single file, to their feeding-grounds. It is one of the most amusing sights in the world to see these solemn

Book of Other Lands

processions of ducks, moving as regularly as a well-drilled army, going forth to feed or returning across the narrow plank to their floating homes.

The chief drink of the Chinese of all classes is tea, and in no country does that delightful plant possess a more delicate flavour. We 'barbarians' add milk and sugar to *ours*, but in China these additions are considered unnecessary, and a faint hint of flower-essence, such as orange-flower, jessamine, rose, or azalea, is thought much more elegant !

The house in which our Chinese boy lives may not seem very cosy or home-like in our eyes, but it is almost sure to contain some marvels of native art. The stiff-looking chairs are exquisitely carved out of hard, glossy black wood: the solemn cabinets are lacquered with the intense red varnish obtained from a tree called the *Rhus vernicifera*. On these cabinets will stand vases and images of milky-white jade, or many-coloured porcelain, dusky bronze, or ivory yellow with years. We all know that our English word 'china,' applied to porcelain, is a reminder of the country where the art of the potter was first developed to the highest perfection, but I do not think so many of us are aware that the word 'silk' has the same origin. In the language of the ancient Greeks Σήρες (Seres) meant the Chinese people, the inhabitants of that vast, remote, and mysterious Asiatic Empire of which the Greek mariners and traders were vaguely aware. Now the first and most famous commodity which the ancient world obtained from that Empire was silk, which, in the language of the Chinese themselves, was—and is—called *Sze*. When one knows this it is clear why the Greeks should have dubbed the silk-making nation the Seres—the Sze-res ! And from that Greek word come all these European equivalents, the English *silk*, the French *soie*, the German *seide*, the Spanish *seda*, the Italian *seta*. According to tradition, the art of weaving into a beautiful fabric the delicate floss spun by the silkworms was introduced into China by Se-ling-she, the wife of the Emperor Shin-Nung, 2737–2697 B.C. This inventive lady has been canonized, that is to say, solemnly recognized and honoured as a saint, and sticks of incense are still burned before her *joss*, or

China

image, on a certain day in the ninth month of the year. When China was still an Empire the empress and her ladies used to worship at the shrine of Se-ling-she on that day, and go through the ceremony of collecting the mulberry-leaves, feeding the palace silk-worms, and winding off some cocoons of silk.

When we are proud—and, perhaps, rightly proud—of Western progress, we ought not to forget that the hands of men have never created anything more beautiful than the porcelains and the silks of which the Chinese discovered the secret so many hundreds of years ago.

Though a Chinese house might seem to our eyes more quaint and severe than charming, we could none of us fail to be fascinated by the typical Chinese garden. Many of us who have never visited the Land of the Dragon have an idea of what that garden would be like—an idea which we take from the familiar scene on a willow-pattern plate. Little bridges, little summer-houses with peaked roofs, weeping willows, and feathery fir-trees—all these things we have seen in blue-and-white porcelain and would see in their natural colours if we went to the country where that porcelain was first made.

One hundred and eleven years before Christ was born the Emperor Wu-Ti established a botanic garden and encouraged the study of plants and flowers. Chinese gardeners have a great advantage in living and working in a country where beautiful flowers abound, and where there are more than four thousand species of flowering plants unknown elsewhere. The peach, the orange, and the wistaria are natives of China, as are also many exquisite varieties of the camellia, rose, lily, rhododendron, and peony. For the rose Chinese artists seem to have an especial love, and you will find a very large one, of a wide-open, shaggy-petalled type, on many cups and saucers, and in panels of fine needlework.

Bridges and arches, often roofed with brilliantly coloured tiles, are a very familiar feature of a Chinese landscape. The great paved causeway from Kuchow to Kweiyang is spanned by twenty-nine of these arches, erected at various times to commemorate the remarkable virtues of some inhabitant of the district. One of these was built in memory of a beautiful

Book of Other Lands

and wealthy widow who steadfastly refused to take a second husband ; another bears the name of a farmer who refused to put up the price of rice in a time of famine.

Let us suppose that our Chinese boy has finished his schooling, has mastered the contents of the 4320 volumes of the Chinese encyclopædia, and is preparing himself for his career as a Government official. It may now be necessary for him to make a long journey, though without leaving his native land. The broad, yellow-coloured river Yangtze-Kiang (usually called the Yangtze for short) in its course of 2900 miles washes the walls of seven of the eighteen ancient capitals of China, and our Chinese youth will probably prefer to travel by water, as roads are bad, good horses scarce, and in the caves of the mountains robbers abound. It may occasionally happen nowadays that certain robbers are seized by the governor of a province, enrolled in the army, and sent off, each with his fan and his paper umbrella, to fight in some other district where fighting is in progress. But our young friend's family will not wish him to run any needless risks, and, after burning incense to all the ancestors and all the friendly spirits, he will set off on a journey from Hang-chow to Tsinan, going by water for the best part of the way. If, in spite of all the trouble taken to obtain the goodwill of the unseen powers, he should fall ill during his travels, one hopes he may be near a mission-hospital, and not fall into the hands of a native doctor, who would endeavour to cure a 'tummy-ache' by sticking needles into the seat of the pain, or a headache by large doses of snake-skin or powdered oyster-shells !

Arriving at the walled city of Hang-chow, the traveller will pause in admiration before the chief gate, with its peaked roof covered with gaily glazed tiles, and its lofty walls, from the cracks in which spring nodding tufts of wildflowers. But if he pauses too long, or arrives too late in the day, the gates of the city may be closed against him. "And what will he do then, poor thing ?" Remain outside all night ? Nothing quite so desperate as *that*. For the payment of one penny he can be hauled up in a basket, attached to a windlass, and in that way he can soon enter Hang-chow, unless, as occasionally

China

happens, the porter in charge of the windlass is sleepy, or has had too much rice-whisky, when he is apt to leave the luckless occupant of the basket dangling for some time in mid-air.

Once safely within, the traveller will understand why this place of many canals should be called Hang-chow, whichever of the two meanings attributed to the phrase be the right one. It means either ' Boat Region ' or ' the City of the Sail,' and either name would be equally suitable. These canals are thickly dotted with boats and barges, and they teem with fish. They are spanned by many beautiful stone bridges, under some of which, known as ' dumb bridges,' it is unlucky to speak as you pass. Through the centre of the city runs a great street ; Marco Polo saw it when he came here in the thirteenth century, but it has lost much of its splendour since then.

Some of the inscriptions on the dangling signboards are very quaint. In the Drug Hall of Propitious Magnificence you can buy the Great Blessing Pill, a general tonic, or, what sounds more useful, the Pill of Ten Thousand Efficacies which is guaranteed to cure ten thousand different diseases ! So jealously guarded are the prescriptions for these marvellous pills that the ingredients are given to blind men to be mixed and pounded and rolled into balls.

At Foochow the traveller will admire the White Pagoda, whose seven stories were built in the ninth century, and rise to a height of 261 feet. There is a rather sad legend connected with one of the great mountains that loom beyond the city. A Chinese lady built a beautiful tower on the summit to welcome her husband on his return from a long voyage. But he did not know that she had done this, so when he sighted the tower from his ship he thought he must be steering into the wrong estuary, turned round, sailed away, and never came back any more !

On reaching Canton our traveller will be told the legend of the Five Immortal Beings who came to the city two thousand years ago, riding upon goats. Their ' mounts ' were changed into stone, and can be seen to this day, but what happened to the riders is less certain. The climate of Canton is dull and cloudy, but the streets are brilliant with colour and the roofs bristle with dragons and devils, set there to frighten evil

Book of Other Lands

spirits away. On the Pearl River lies an unbelievably large and closely packed mass of native boats, in which whole families of fishermen and boatmen and their wives and children have their homes. Toward sunset the fumes which rise from their cooking-pots make quite a thick haze above the river.

Still travelling by water, our Chinese youth may now betake himself to Kwei-Lin, a place frequented by two very different sorts of people—pirates and poets! Dense forests of cinnamon-trees once clothed the fantastic sugar-loaf peaks which surround the city and are reflected in the crystal clear waters of the lakes. The trees have nearly all vanished, but there are caves among the hills where robbers lurk, ready to swoop down and assail travellers, or to launch boats in pursuit of richly-laden craft. On the lakes you will see men fishing with the aid of tame cormorants. At night, fireworks and torches are used to dazzle the fish, and the black waters are dotted with sudden points of coloured flame.

One of the numerous poets who dwell in Kwei-Lin, Li-She by name, was captured and held to ransom by these cave-robbers, but he charmed their ears and softened their hearts so much with the following impromptu verses that they let him go unscathed:

Over the stream-side village
The rainy vapours sweep :
From the shadows of the forest
The bandits' poignards leap.
Yet why should we be anxious,
Or try to run away ?
The world is full of people
Far wickeder than they !

To reach Kwei-Yang, his next halting-place, the traveller will have to cross a range of grim and lonely limestone mountains. The only inhabitants of the region are a peculiar tribe called the Miao. Their women wear short, kilted dresses, leaving the knees bare, peaked sun-bonnets and necklaces of silver. In the spring all these women array themselves in gaily-hued garments hung with tiny bells, and dance round a young fir-tree to the music of bamboo pipes played by the men of the tribe.

If our traveller desires to purchase some of the most beauti-



HONG KONG SEEN FROM ACROSS THE HARBOUR

Photo E.N.A.



PHYSIC STREET, CANTON

Photo E.N.A.

China

ful silks that even this land of exquisite fabrics can offer, he will not omit a visit to Soo-chow. In this quaint town, which is built, like Venice, among canals and lagoons, hundreds of busy weavers ply their trade. The looms, which have not changed their form for many centuries, stand on the earthen floors of the low, grimy huts ; beside each is a bowl of water, in which the weaver dips his hands from time to time. If the busy fellow takes a holiday and goes for a walk, he will have no less than six fine pagodas to look at, to say nothing of the clock-tower which surmounts the University built by the Methodists of New Orleans. About a thousand years ago there was a worthy citizen of Soo-chow who was very anxious that the young men of his native city should always be good scholars. So, to inspire them with learned zeal, he built two pagodas in the form of pens, and one in the form of an ink-pot ! The ink that fills a Chinese ink-pot is usually the so-called ' India ' ink, really manufactured in a town which bears the cheerful name of ' Peace and Happiness ' (An-king). The method of manufacture is curious. A large number of lamps is placed in a room with a low, knobby ceiling, and made to smoke ; then the soot from the knobs is collected, and there is your India ink !

Outside the eastern gate of An-king is a seven-storied pagoda, all hung with tinkling bells, to which many pilgrims come. If our traveller pauses to scan the inscriptions which they have left behind them, he will find this amusing one, signed, " A Man from the Tung Ling Lake " :

On all sides are inscriptions, all written by fools.
I, who am also a fool, add my scribble to theirs.
I am clay of the same lump as themselves.

About a hundred years ago one of the most popular materials in England and America for gentlemen's trousers, and little boys' jackets, and old ladies' petticoats, was a stuff called nankeen, which took its name from the town of Nanking where it was made. Those were the days of Nanking's glory, when the Porcelain Pagoda, one of the marvels of Chung-Hwa, still towered above the tiled roofs, and the people were busily occupied making the fabric for the trousers of such famous Westerners as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Palmerston.

Book of Other Lands

But the Porcelain Pagoda was overthrown in the Lai Ping rebellion (1853), nankeen went out of fashion in the West, and now chestnuts and cherry-trees shower their delicate petals upon the deserted gardens of palaces and temples where mandarins and monks dwell no more. But Tsi-nan, where Confucius lived and taught, is still a centre of great literary activity.

In the course of his wanderings our Chinese friend will have seen much to make him more proud than ever of his own country—the Celestial Kingdom, as its children sometimes call it—and much, if he is a thoughtful boy, to make him anxious about the future. Since 1912, when the ancient Empire was cast down and a Republic set up in its stead, it has been difficult to tell in what direction China is moving, and what the fate of her millions of people will be.

Peking—the Gate of Heaven—was the centre of the Empire and the chief home of the emperor, and to Peking our traveller is sure to go, if he has not been there before, or to return, if it is already familiar ground.

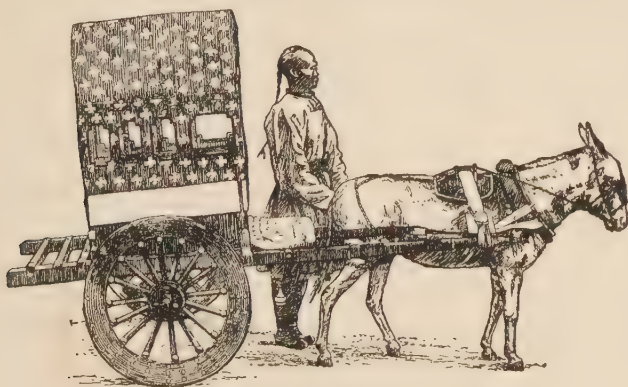
Though it was not at Peking, but at the now-ruined city of Xanadu, that Kubla Khan did

A stately pleasure-dome decree,

the hero of Coleridge's haunting little poem was the founder of the imperial splendour of the Chinese capital. Kubla Khan was not a Chinaman, but a Mongol, and a very powerful fellow indeed. His conquests made him ruler of a vast Empire, stretching from the Arctic Ocean to the Strait of Malacca, and from Korea to Asia Minor and the confines of Hungary. He held his Court in barbaric splendour at a city in north-eastern China, then known as Cambaluc, but afterward as Peking. There he and his successors built a marvellous labyrinth of temples and palaces and gardens, walls within walls and gates within gates, the famous mysterious Forbidden City. The stately ceremonies, the stiff and gorgeous pageants, that once marked the daily life of the Son of Heaven, are no longer observed within those dragon-guarded courts. But, even though the glory has departed, it must still be a thrilling experience to leave the bustle and clamour of the Tsien Men street, where camels and

China

donkeys and thick-necked, tawny Manchurian ponies, palanquins and rickshaws (light, two-wheeled carts for carrying passengers, drawn by coolies) all struggle together, and step through the square, yellow-tiled archway into the silence of those vast imperial domains. Stags and storks wrought in bronze guard the outer courtyard, where there are white marble lanterns, and golden bowls full of goldfish. Marvellous bridges of milk-white stone lead to the islands of the Lotus Lake. This is the palace known as the Winter Palace ; the Summer one is almost more gorgeous, with its glittering



A CART IN PEKING

gateway of scarlet and green and gold, its crystal-clear lakes, its pagodas that look like the dwellings of quaint, more-than-mortal beings. Of the many temples in the ancient capital of Kubla Khan none is more amazingly beautiful than the Temple of Heaven, believed by the Chinese to be the very centre of the whole universe, where the emperor went in solemn procession every year, offered a sacrifice on the open-air altar, and adored the Supreme Creator of the Universe. Only he, his people said, was worthy to offer that sacrifice and that adoration. Before approaching the altar, he was solemnly robed, in a special pavilion roofed with magnificent tiles of an intense peacock blue. There he donned his vestments embroidered with dragons in threads of pure gold, his ermine cap surmounted by nine little golden dragons clasping one

Book of Other Lands

immense pearl, and his necklace of one hundred and eight pearls, and thence he was borne, under arches of purest marble and dazzling blue and green tiles, amid sounds of music, to the marble altar where he bowed himself in worship of the Shang Ti, or Supreme Ruler, before whom even the Emperor of the Central Glory of the world knew himself to be less than a grain of sand.

From these deserted gardens and forgotten shrines our young Chinaman may return with a rather heavy heart to the city outside the girdling walls. There, instead of shining pagodas, gay with lovely colours and tinkling bells, he will see the stark and grimy chimneys of modern factory buildings. And, after dusk, instead of the soft, wavering gleam of painted paper lanterns, the pitiless blue glare of electric arc-lamps will throw the shadows of the dragon-crested roofs upon the ground.

Yet Peking is still a city of wonder, Kubla Khan's city—and the city of those delightful little dogs to whom we have given its name, but who were called 'sleeve-dogs' by the grave and gorgeous mandarins who used to carry one in either silken sleeve. Of all its wonders, which will dwell most clearly in the mind of the young traveller whom we have followed all the way from Hang-chow? If he should be the sort of youth who can only see what is before his nose, it may be the Temple of Heaven or the Lotus Lake. But if he be lucky enough to have a touch of poetic fancy, it will surely be the ancient observatory of Kubla Khan. Thence the wisest of the great Khan's servants watched and measured the movements of the stars. No one in the West had thought of such scientific experiments then, and the queerest and quaintest ideas prevailed about the order and meaning of the high hosts of the sky. To aid them in their task the astronomers of the Khan had huge mathematical instruments, wrought of bronze. Our Chinese friend stood beside them, and saw that they are supported by great bronze dragons, imperial dragons, bristling and fierce, the emblems of a China that has had its day of splendour, and is now passing into the dim region of the things that have been, but can be no more.

CHAPTER II

JAPAN : THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

WHEN, more than thirty years ago, a brilliant young Irishman went out to Japan to teach English literature to Japanese students in the great university of Tokyo, somebody gave him a piece of very good advice. And that was to make a note *at once* of his first impressions of the country, for no impressions are so vivid or so quickly forgotten.

The name of that young Irishman was Lafcadio Hearn. He was so happy in Japan that he ceased to care for any other country in the world, and chose to live there to the end of his days. To him we owe some of the most charming word-pictures of his adopted country that have been painted in any language. And that is saying a great deal, for more than one famous French author has written delightfully of Japan.

The first thing that struck Lafcadio Hearn when he went for his first rickshaw drive through the streets of Yokohama was the delicious clearness of the air and the beautiful blue tinge in the distances. All the tiniest details of the landscape were exquisitely distinct ; and high in the pale sky towered the silver cone of the sleeping volcano Fuji-yama, the " Peerless Mountain," one of the most famous and most beautiful mountains in the world.

The next thing that Hearn noticed was the " dancing, white, mushroom-shaped hat " of the runner who drew his rickshaw. And, as they sped through the streets, he was struck, as all strangers are, by the smallness of the houses and of the people. A Japanese house is built on an exceedingly simple plan, and of very light and—we should think—flimsy materials. Four wooden posts are driven into the ground ; on the top of these a roof is placed : and there you are ! Sometimes the roof is tiled with large, violet-coloured tiles ; sometimes bulbs are

Book of Other Lands

planted between the chinks, so that the stiff, purple iris may blossom there; but you will not see the elaborate, steep, angular, demon-crested housetops that you see in China. The reason for this is plain when we remember that the six volcanic islands which form the Empire of Japan are visited from time to time by typhoons, fierce windstorms that sweep all before them, and earthquakes, which would swiftly lay a solid building in ruins, burying the inhabitants beneath it.

Of course, the Japanese house is divided into rooms, but there are no inside walls. Paper screens, running in grooves on the floor, are all that is considered necessary. There are no doors. If you wish to leave or enter a room, you simply slide your paper screen along its groove until there is sufficient space left for you to pass through. Perhaps it is because they are accustomed to living in such fragile habitations that the Japanese are very gentle in their movements. If they were the least bit rough or violent their houses would burst and split and collapse on all sides!

China and Japan are such close neighbours that there are bound to be many points of resemblance between them, especially as the art and culture of the smaller country have been deeply influenced by those of the larger. Yet the traveller will be struck by contrasts as well as by resemblances when he has an opportunity of comparing Japanese and Chinese customs and ideas. The appearance of the streets in the two countries is, at the first glance, very similar. Oblong signboards painted in rich blues and purples, with paler glints of light red, white and gold, dangle and swing before the low-roofed shops and houses. The Japanese borrowed their alphabet from the Chinese, and the elaborate lettering on these signboards adds much to the picturesqueness of the scene. When Lafcadio Hearn went to Japan the Roman alphabet—*our* alphabet—was already beginning to creep in, and a society called the *Romaji-Kwai* had been formed, to his indignation and dismay, especially to encourage its use instead of the more decorative but—to strangers—quite unreadable native script.

Since that time Western ideas have made rapid progress in the East, and you would now find many notices—some of them

Japan

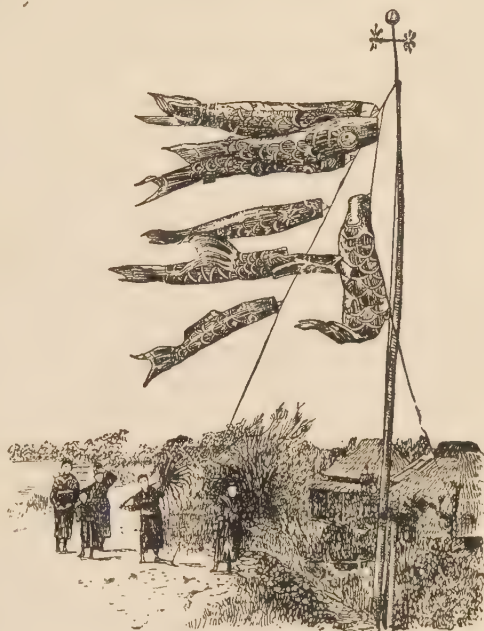
very quaint—in English, hanging outside Japanese shops. Outside a poulterer's you would see the announcement that he also sells "Extract of Fowl," by which he means eggs, and an enterprising merchant who deals in ladies' hats declares proudly that at his establishment "Ladies are furnished in the Upper Story."

When a Japanese decides to open a shop, all he has got to do is to slide back the screen which forms the front wall of his house and arrange on the floor, in full view of the passer-by, such goods as he may have for sale.

One of the most charming shops in Japan is the toy-shop, or the toy-stall at the street-corner.

A little Jap need not be rich in pocket-

money in order to be able to buy the most fascinating toys. Kites play a great part in the lives of the boys, and gorgeous things they are, made in the forms of fishes, or dragons, or butterflies, and shining with all the colours of the rainbow. Battledore-and-shuttlecock will appeal to either boys or girls, but dolls, of course, are the delight of the girls, who have a doll-festival of their very own, called the *Oshinasama*, or "Honourable Effigies," on the 3rd of March. Most Western children have had Japanese dolls to play with, and know what they are like—those smiling, bald-headed boy-dolls, with feet and hands that remind one of a real baby's



FLYING FISH-KITES

Book of Other Lands

feet and hands, but with such queer, squashy bodies, made, it seems, of paper and muslin and bamboo, which squeak the first time you squeeze them, and break the third time ! Dolls of this kind you will see in the arms of a little Jap girl during the Oshinasama festival, but she will probably have others, much more beautiful, at home. If she belongs to a fairly well-off family, she will be the possessor of a most wonderful dolls'



JAPANESE GIRL WITH
HER DOLL

house, inhabited by dolls that are really models of Japanese warriors and ladies of the olden times. It is only during the dolls' festival that this magnificent toy is brought out, and one of the greatest compliments that can be paid to a foreigner is an invitation to be present on that occasion. The centre of the model house will be occupied by dolls representing the emperor and empress in old court costume, squatting on the floor and looking very stiff and stately indeed. Round them are grouped courtiers and ladies-in-waiting, and further away you will see the imperial band of flutes and drums ready to make

music for their majesties. Londoners and visitors to London have an opportunity of seeing these *dairi-hina* (court dolls) for themselves in the Victoria and Albert Museum, to which H.R.H. Princess Mary has lent two complete sets, perfect in every detail. Such toys as these could not be bought at ordinary toy-shops, still less at street-corner stalls ; it requires the skill of a cunning craftsman to model their faces and hands, and to make their elaborate robes, fans, and weapons.

In the larger of Princess Mary's two collections of *dairi-hina* the emperor wears an outer garment of rigid, heavy black silk. On his head is a queer-looking cap, like an inverted bowl, with a knob rather like the knob on the head-dress worn by the Doge Loredano of Venice in the famous portrait which most of us know well by sight ; to this knob are attached the purple silken cords which meet in a large bow

Japan

under the imperial chin. At the back of the cap is a long black quill, curling over at the tip and pointing in the opposite direction to the imperial nose. In his hand he holds a tightly-closed fan, but the fan which the empress holds is half-open, showing its design of golden storks on a background of intense scarlet. Very gorgeous is the empress, with her towering headdress of golden filigree from which dangle garlands of golden flowers and long cords and tassels of red silk ; her outer-robe is of pale cinnamon-brown silken stuff, her under-robe is



A ' KAGO ' OR TRAVELLING-CHAIR

of brocade with an elaborate design in dull blues and greens. Another of the Mikados in Princess Mary's collection has bushy white eyebrows and a white beard, which give him an air of great wisdom. Yet another bears a quiver full of arrows on his shoulder, and a bow in his hand. The ladies-in-waiting of the empress bear bowls and baskets of dwarf-trees and flowering sprays ; the court-musicians, in quaint black caps that look like old-fashioned tea-cosies perched on their shaven heads, seem just upon the point of blowing vigorously into their flutes and banging energetically on their drums.

It must be a sad moment for the little Japanese girl when the Oshinasama is over, and all these enchanting toys are wrapped

Book of Other Lands

up in silk and wadding and put away for a whole year ! In May comes her brother's festival, the *Tango*, when the outside of the house is hung with brilliantly-coloured flags, and a huge paper carp, the emblem of perseverance and courage, is attached by its nose to a bamboo pole on the roof. These great fishes flap and float in their thousands over every Japanese city on the 5th of May. The toys used to celebrate the *Tango* are chiefly models of warriors and their steeds. When they are brought out, rice-cakes are solemnly offered up, and the father of the family tells his sons inspiring stories of the gallant deeds of their ancestors. The model horses may be as large as retriever dogs ; the model suits of armour are beautifully wrought, as are also the little swords, with the curved blades and long, slender hilts characteristic of Japanese weapons.

Everybody who has visited Japan describes it as a perfect paradise for babies and children, and nobody who has studied Japanese art, particularly Japanese colour-prints, could doubt that it really is so. To a Japanese child it must seem as if the whole world was planned for his amusement. He is never cross, he never cries ; nobody ever hits him or scolds him, or seems to think him in the way. So, of course, his round, fat, jolly little face is always ready to crinkle into a smile. Before he can walk or run he is carried about on the shoulders of his patient elder sister, and sometimes she still carries him when he is really quite old enough to trot upon his own legs. As soon as his intelligence begins to brighten, the first part of his education begins. He learns how to bow politely to his elders, how to kneel down and get up again without flopping or struggling, how to carry a lacquer tray with a fragile porcelain cup on it, and present it gracefully to a guest. Respectful though he must be to his elders, he is not afraid of them. On certain festival days old and young, the most dignified grandfather and the tiniest grandchild, go out together to fly kites. Then the air is soon full of paper monsters, climbing and floating and tugging at their strings, while down below joyous crowds of men and boys surge to and fro, and follow with eager eyes the adventures of their kites among the clouds.

Japan

The baby on his sister's back has a baby kite, fastened to a short string, which he watches as intently as the bigger boys watch theirs.

Another favourite amusement, though a much quieter one, is making pictures with coloured sand. Each child is armed with three or four bags of sand, one of black, one of white, and the others of different tints, red, yellow or blue. With the white sand he first makes a square, smooth patch on the ground, then with the black he will trace the outline of a fish, a bird or a flower, and this will afterward be filled in with the coloured sands, according to the taste of the little artist.

Like all children in all countries the small Japs love fairy-tales, and do not mind how often they hear their favourites retold. They will squat for hours round any long-suffering elder who will relate yet again the stories that both the speaker and the audience know by heart. One of the most charming, as well as one of the most popular, of these stories is about a boy called Momotaro. His name means 'a Pear,' and it was given to him for a very curious reason. Here is the story. In one of the rocky mountainous regions of Japan there lived, once upon a time, an old couple who, to their great grief, had never had any children. Every day the old man went into the forest to cut wood, while the old woman went to wash clothes in the swift, foaming stream that flowed down the side of the mountain. One day, when she was busy rubbing and slapping the blue cotton clothes on the flat stones at the edge of the torrent, she saw a remarkably fine pear, a tremendous pear, bobbing in the water and being borne down the stream toward her. She promptly leaned over, stretched out her hand, and pulled the pear ashore, and then, to her astonishment, she heard from inside it the faint cry of a child. Full of excitement the old woman hurried home on her high, clattering, wooden clogs, and, in a great hurry but with much care, she cut the fruit in two. And in the very centre was a tiny baby boy. The wood-cutter and his wife decided to adopt as their own son the child that had thus mysteriously come to them, and, in remembrance of his coming, they gave him the name of Momotaro. The pear-baby grew up into a fine,

Book of Other Lands

fearless boy, and when he was about seventeen years old, he suddenly made up his mind to go and kill an aged demon who lived on an island in a lake not far away. With him he took a good supply of food, corn and rice, wrapped up in a fresh green bamboo leaf. The first 'person' he met was a hungry wasp. Instead of driving it away, Momotaro allowed it to share his rice, and when the wasp heard the errand upon which the boy was bound, it decided to go with him. The next 'person' he met was a land-crab, sidling along on its curved claws. The crab also was hungry, and, like the wasp, it decided, having shared Momotaro's rice, to share his fortunes as well. The three companions continued their journey toward the island-home of the aged demon, and the next 'person' they met was a chestnut. No, not a chestnut horse, but a *real* chestnut, off a tree. Like the crab and the wasp, this queer stranger was fed by the kind-hearted Momotaro, and joined his little troop. And the next 'person' they met, and refreshed, and took with them, was a large, round millstone.

When Momotaro and his four odd-looking allies reached the lake they got into a boat and, as they paddled across the clear, bright water they thought out an excellent plan by which to get rid of the aged demon. The island on which they landed was as delightful as if it had been the home of a good instead of a bad spirit, and in the middle of its blossoming groves they found a house which they knew must be the headquarters of the fearful old fellow they had come to kill. Very luckily for Momotaro, the master of the house was out; this gave him time to execute his plan. The millstone climbed up on to the roof, the crab hid in a deep jar of water, the chestnut crept into the warm ashes on the hearth, and the wasp slipped into a chink in the wall. "You wait outside," they all said to Momotaro, "you leave it to *us*!" And, though he must have longed to play a part in the scene which followed, the boy obeyed his four quaint friends. From his hiding-place just outside the house, he saw the return of the aged demon. Now, demons are never very handsome, but if we may judge from the portraits of them which Japanese artists make in ivory and bronze, or paint upon paper flags, the Japanese demon is the

Japan

least pleasant-looking member of the whole demon family. Bristling and grinning and squinting, the demon of the island entered his house. It was a cold spring day, and he hastened to stretch out his hands (I suppose one ought really to call them *claws*) to the warm ashes on the hearth. Then out popped the hot chestnut, and gave him a stinging welcome. With a roar, he ran to plunge his smarting claws into the water-jar, only to have them sharply pinched by the crab that lurked inside. He was being punished at last for all the mischief he had done! Perhaps it dawned upon him by this time that there were unseen enemies in his house, for he made a dash for the door. But the wasp whizzed out and stung him on the nose, and a minute later the millstone came crashing down on his head; so that was the end of *him*. One hopes that Momotaro and the four avengers took possession of the lovely little island, and lived there happily for many years, and that the old wood-cutter and his wife were never forgotten by the boy whom they had found inside the big pear.

This is the story that has enchanted many thousands of little Japs for many years, a story that their mothers still tell them again and again, sometimes in winter when they all squat on the floor wearing their thickest padded gowns, sometimes in the spring when the whole family goes out to admire the cherry-blossom in the park, or in the summer when the shimmering curtain of pale purple wistaria that hangs from the square wooden arches of some temple is the object of their walk.

The Japanese have a passionate love of flowers. One of the most prosperous of the street-traders in Tokyo is he who bears a long pole across his shoulder weighted at either end with a deep hamper full of many-coloured blossoms. The Western custom of cramming a tightly-packed bunch of flowers into a dumpy vase seems cruel and foolish in the eyes of the Japanese, who have raised flower-arrangement to the level of a fine art. The vase they will choose is probably high and rather narrow, giving plenty of room for long stems to stand in fresh water, and they hardly ever put more than one or two flowers in each. To persuade a branch of plum-blossom, or a purple iris, or a slim golden chrysanthemum, to stand *just* right, to take *just*

Book of Other Lands

the curve that best suits the background, to have every leaf and petal in perfect harmony, a Japanese will cheerfully spend more than an hour. Flowers are the chief ornament of a Japanese room. You will not find in it the stiffly-carved black chairs, the brilliant scarlet-lacquered cabinets, that the Chinese love. Yet in the plain, bare rooms of the Japanese house there are little touches of beauty where a European



IRRIGATION WHEEL

would not think of looking for them. In each sliding screen there is a *hiki-te*, literally, a hand-draw, a notch or a knob by which it is moved along, and the *hiki-te*, which you will hardly notice at all unless somebody calls your attention to it, is often an exquisite work of art. Some are made of brass or copper, enamelled in soft colours and quaint designs; others are of mother-of-pearl, covered with a delicate tracery

of bronze foliage. The staring round heads of the big nails that hold the cross-beams of these flimsy dwellings in place are hidden with metal ornaments called *kugi-kakushi*, wrought of bronze, or brass, or copper, and shaped like gourds, or leaves, birds, dragons, and flowers.

Loving flowers so much, it is natural that the Japanese should be ardent and skilful gardeners. They excel in landscape-gardening, and will sometimes spend four times as long in *planning* a beautiful little park, with rocks, waterfalls, lakes, and bridges, as will be spent in *carrying out* the completed plan. He is a patient and painstaking fellow, the Japanese gardener. Once a year he will devote a week or ten days to each pine-tree under his care, removing every weak or withered needle and

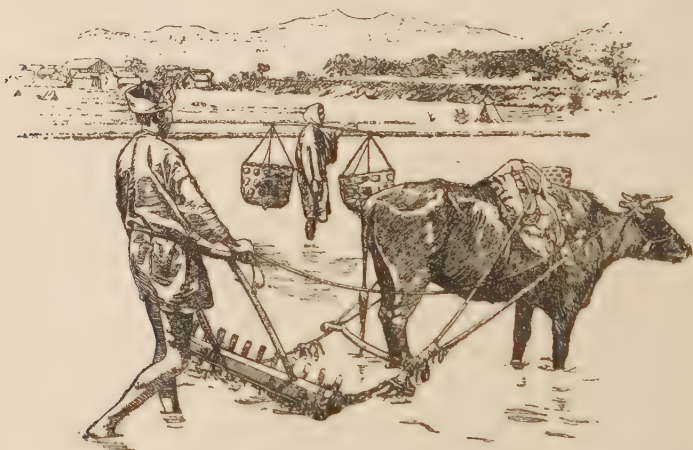
Japan

giving the tree a general 'brush up.' A family that lives in a town, and cannot have a piece of land adjoining the house, will have a garden none the less, complete with pine-trees, crags, cascades, and bridges—a garden about the size of a tea-table with trees no bigger than a rather large tuft of parsley, and bridges that nothing heavier than a mouse could cross in safety. If you were to take a walk in the country you would see whole fields full of flowers—iris, azalea, chrysanthemum, peony—according to the time of year. Canals, some of them mere ditches, are dug alongside these fields, so that there may be no lack of water, and often you would find a man working with his feet the odd-looking paddle-wheel by which the necessary amount of moisture is obtained for the plants. There are, however, no meadows starred with wildflowers in the land of this flower-loving people, no lanes fringed with clover and convolvulus and golden-rod; and for nearly half the year the turf is a dreary brown or grey colour, instead of freshly green as it is in most Western countries, even in winter.

In Japanese art and Japanese legend mountains, lakes, and islands play an important part. (You will remember that there are all three in the background of the story of Momotaro.) This is very natural, for the Empire of Japan consists of six islands, all of them so mountainous that only an eighth part of the total surface is flat enough for cultivation, and all of them rich in beautiful lakes. The famous inland sea, between Shikoku, Kinshiu, and Nippon, a sheet of water 1325 square miles in extent, is dotted all over with wooded islets. It is from the island of Nippon that the whole group takes the name by which it is known to the Japanese themselves. 'Nippon' means 'the Source of the Sun,' and there are many Japanese children who have not the faintest idea that they are living in a country which some other children are taught to call Japan. Our old friend Marco Polo, when he visited China, heard his Chinese friends talking about a place to the east of China, a place which *they* described in their own language as *Jih-Pen*, which means exactly the same thing as 'Nippon'—the region where the sun rises. Marco, being an Italian, changed 'Jih-Pen' into *Zipango*, and when, some three hundred years later,

Book of Other Lands

Portuguese adventurers reached that place to the east of China, they concluded that it was 'Zipango,' and went home and told their friends so. Those Portuguese mariners were the first Europeans to set foot upon Japan, but they were soon followed by others. St Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary, was sent by King John III of Portugal to convert the inhabitants of the Portuguese Indies to Christianity. He preached and taught at Travancore and Goa, and visited Malacca, the Banda Islands, and Ceylon. In 1548 he pushed as far as



PLOUGHING A RICE-FIELD WITH A WATER-BUFFALO

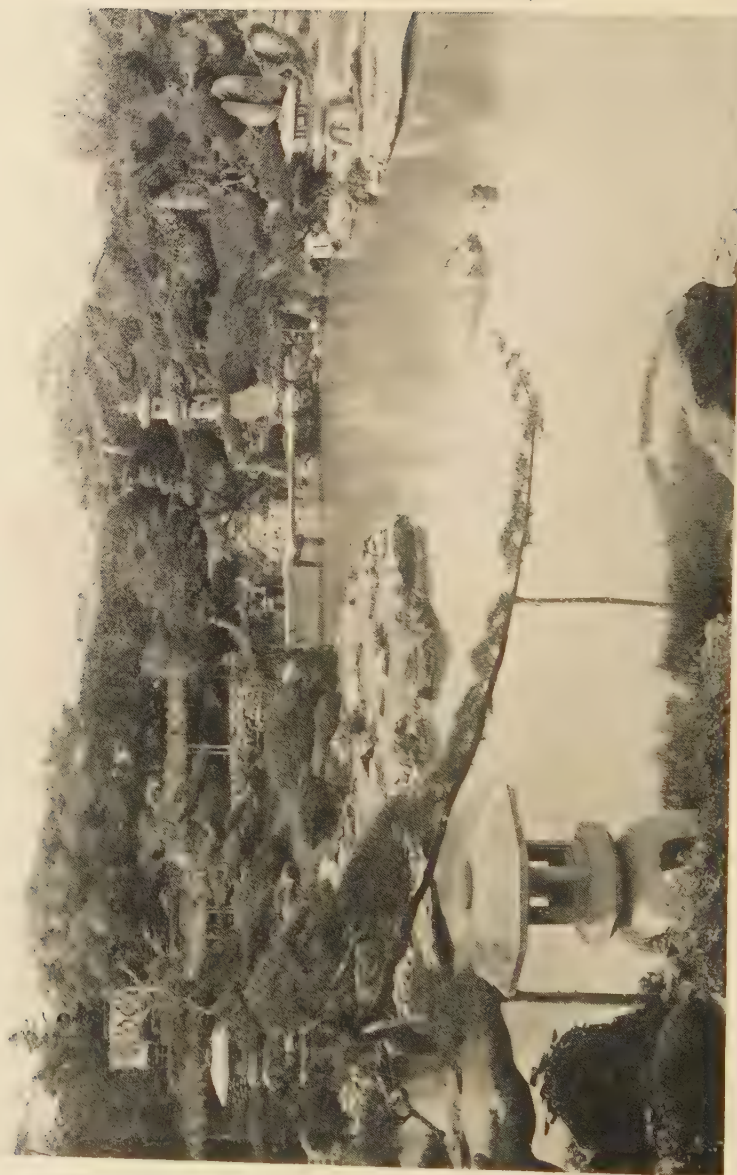
'Zipango,' and the Christian community he founded there continued to flourish for a hundred years.

The native religion of the Japanese is called Shintoism, or the Way of the Gods. The name is borrowed from China—'Tao' being, as we have seen, the Chinese for 'the Way'—but the creed is purely Japanese. Great honour is paid to spirits or *Kami*, who once lived on earth in the form of famous scholars, heroes, and kings. In the year A.D. 522 Buddhist missionaries from China arrived in Japan, and the faith they brought with them spread so rapidly and struck such deep roots that it remains to this day one of the two great national religions. Japanese craftsmen have wrought marvellous works of art to enrich the temples of Buddha. Such is the



AT A BUDDHIST SHRINE

Photo Donald McLeish



THE GARDEN OF PRINCE HOTHO AT TOKIO

Photo E.N.A.

Japan

great bronze incense-burner, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, with its life-sized pigeons and peacocks, so exquisitely modelled even to the separate fronds of the peacocks' tail-feathers. Both the Shintoist and Buddhist shrines are adorned with beautiful flower-vases, candle-sticks and incense-burners, and stone lanterns shaped like small temples themselves.

Most of the famous shrines of Japan are surrounded by groves of fir-trees, camphor-trees, cryptomerias, cedars, and bamboos, and have pools and fountains in their outer courts. One of the most famous of all is the Buddhist temple at Kamakura, which has as many treasures, and is visited by as many pious pilgrims as Canterbury Cathedral in the Middle



THE GREAT BRONZE BUDDHA AT KAMAKURA

Ages. One of these treasures is a bronze bell, nine feet high, which is rung, not with a clapper, but with a swinging beam which hangs from the peaked wooden roof above. If you touch this bell quite lightly with your hand you will hear a soft murmur ; but if you swing the beam and smite it only once, its mighty voice will peal over the pine-clad hills in long, thundering waves of sound that ten minutes later have not died away. Towering above the feathery-tufted pines is a gigantic bronze image of Buddha himself, sitting cross-legged in meditation, with his hands palm-upward on his lap, the tips of the thumbs and the second knuckles of the fore-fingers meeting. Incense burns before him, and on either side of the brazier are lotus plants wrought in gilded bronze fifteen feet high. Much less impressive is the green bronze horse in one of the Nagasaki temples, a thick-set, surprised, snub-nosed animal which, according to the local legend,

Book of Other Lands

sometimes 'comes alive' and gallops through the town after dusk.

In Japan, as in China, Western influences are making themselves felt with greater force every year, and not always with very happy results for the Japanese themselves. But whereas China had been in touch with Europe from a very early date, and was gradually penetrated by European ideas, the awakening of Japan was startlingly sudden. Till the middle of the nineteenth century Japan kept all her ancient beliefs and customs unchanged and untouched, and looked with an unfriendly eye at all foreign intruders. The country was ruled under the feudal system, as England had been in the Middle Ages, by powerful land-holders known as *Daimos*, who had squires and serfs just as the knights and barons of Plantagenet days had. The squire of a Daimo was called a *Samurai*, and was a very fierce and warlike person indeed. From his childhood—for he was born a Samurai, a member of a caste of hereditary warriors—he was trained to follow faithfully the *Bushido*, the Warriors' Way. Unhulled rice was his chief food, archery and fencing and horsemanship were his amusements: he was not allowed to read or write poetry, or to go to the theatre, in case such pursuits should weaken his valour. When a Daimo rode forth to do battle against his foes it would be difficult to imagine a more terrifying sight than he. His head was protected by a helmet shaped rather like a fisherman's sou'wester hat, with a wide spreading flap behind; this helmet, his leg-pieces, and his cuirass, were of bronze, but the rest of his body-armour was made of closely plaited silk braid, in pretty pale colours, green, blue, white and red. From his waist hung something between an Elizabethan farthingale and a Scottish kilt made of this braid; on his feet he had very broad-toed shoes of shaggy dark fur. He would not dream of going into the fray without a—no, not a sword, though, of course, he had a sword, too—without a fan, a special warriors' fan, with iron instead of ivory or lacquer sticks at either end. Girt about him would be a beautiful sword, with a keen, curved blade and a long, lean hilt. The swordsmiths of Japan were marvellous craftsmen, and they

Japan

discovered marvellous ways of tempering steel, ways that were kept secret, and handed down from father to son. All this quaint old feudal world was abruptly broken up and wiped out in 1867, when the last *Shogun*, or commander-in-chief of the Daimo Army, offered his resignation to the Mikado, and the leaders of the nation, after a sharp tussle with the old-fashioned minority, deliberately resolved to throw open Japan to Western methods and ideas, to abolish the Daimo and the Samurai alike, to build railways and set up telegraph-poles, and have an army with real guns and a navy with iron-clad battleships.

One of the most regrettable results of this upheaval has been the introduction of European dress into Japan. Of course, comparatively few Japanese have given up their native costume even now, but every year more and more young



ACTOR GARBED AS A SAMURAI

students take to wearing bowler hats and tweed trousers, and more and more young girls adopt the high-heeled shoes and the short dresses in which they look so much less charming than they did in their former attire. To Western eyes the national dress of both youths and maidens looks remarkably like a rather pretty dressing-gown. Small children wear kimonos of silk or cotton, gay with the loveliest colours and the quaintest patterns. One child will have Fuji-yama at sunset on his back, another, a flight of storks or a bough of cherry-blossom. But as boys and girls grow older the colours tone down, until, when they are men and women, blue, purple, grey and black are what they most often choose to wear. Japanese ladies have been too wise to give up their pretty way of dressing their thick black hair, in high, stiff coils, but Japanese men have

Book of Other Lands

ceased to shave their heads in patches, thinking, perhaps rightly, that a shaved head ornamented with poodle-like clumps of hair would not go particularly well with a bowler hat.

Politeness, an elaborate and ceremonious politeness which makes Western manners seem rough and abrupt by contrast, is so deeply rooted in the Japanese character that no amount of contact with the West has banished it from their daily lives—so far! When one Japanese lady goes to visit another, they both kneel down, with the palms of their hands on the floor, and bow until their foreheads touch the matting. If you pay a call upon a Japanese gentleman he will thank you for setting your honourable foot upon his miserably unworthy threshold.

There is one thing in Japan which has survived all the swift and dazzling changes of the last sixty years, and that is the theatre. Their dramatic art is very ancient and intensely national, and the actors and actresses wear the old-time costumes of long-dead royalties and celebrities, and remind modern audiences of the splendour of their little Empire in days gone by.

A Japanese theatre is not a bit like a Western theatre. The stage is not framed, like a big living picture, in a gilded and curtained square. Two paths, edged with real flowers, lead straight through the audience to the stage, so that if the play shows a Daimo arriving at his house, or at the house of a friend, the audience sees and hears him arrive, for he stalks and clatters in the very midst of them. The prompter, who jogs the memory of the actors, is visible all the time, and black-clad attendants flit about the stage, arranging robes, bringing and removing stage-properties, holding torches or lanterns, and making sure that when the principal actor begins his longest speech every curve of his gorgeous garments is exactly as it should be. Of course, every one can *see* these satellites of the greater stars, but, since they are dressed in black, it is good manners to pretend that you cannot see them!

A Japanese actor must undergo a severe training from his youth. He must learn to do without 'make-up'—a thing no Western actor could do—and to change his features and ex-

Japan

pression, according to the part he is playing, without a single dab of paint. A really skilful actor can, simply by contracting his facial muscles, make himself quite unrecognizable. He must also learn to move, to stand, and to squat, with perfect grace, and in accordance with strict rules. He must study colour and form. He must wear his magnificent feudal robes, his peaked and lacquered armour that makes him look like a walking pagoda, with unfailing dignity. A clumsy movement, an awkward gesture, and his reputation would be gone for ever ! He also needs a marvellous memory and much bodily strength, for a Japanese play lasts nine hours ! The audience camps out, as if at a picnic, each family armed with a little charcoal stove on which to make tea. When they are pleased with the play or the players they all shriek "*Taicho*" (' Bravo ! ') at the top of their voices.

The Japanese actor has no dressing-room to which he can retreat when a change of costume is necessary. A sort of paper tent is lowered by a cord, and there, in the centre of the stage but hidden from the audience, the transformation is effected. If—as happens very often—one of the characters is killed in the course of the play, two boys come and hold up a sheet, behind which he rises and walks off the stage ! Red paint is shed by the gallon.

The orchestra is kept in a sort of cage, where it makes so much noise that all the actors have to roar in order to make themselves heard. The villain of the piece rolls his eyes in the most alarming fashion, one up and one down, or both up, so that the eyeballs disappear. The hero, as he makes his entry along the flowery path, does the ' goose-step,' raising his foot to the level of his chin at every stride. It was not until comparatively recent years that actresses and actors were seen on the same stage in Japan. Formerly they played in separate theatres, the women taking men's parts in one, while the men took women's parts in the other. Quaint and stiff and violent as the Japanese drama would seem in our eyes, we must remember that when one of these strutting and glaring heroes visits a Western theatre, the players are, in *his* opinion, a very awkward, ill-trained, and inartistic set of people.

Book of Other Lands

The differences are great and the contrasts are strong between 'grown-up' ideas in one country and in another. But children are much the same all the world over, and Japan is the place where any child would feel at home. The towns, the shops, the people, all look like charming toys, toys that would be easily broken, but that are full of delights if you touch them gently. The streets between the paper houses are all



A TOY-SHOP

nodding with painted paper lanterns after dusk. The rickshaws that speed to and fro have the air of go-carts made by a child with rather big dolls to push about in them. At almost every street-corner there is a toy-stall, where you can buy vivid paper kites, smiling dolls in frocks of brilliant cotton, tops and battledores and tiny cups. Here and there is an almost more fascinating stall, round

which you will nearly always see a many-coloured group of quite small children, keenly interested in what is going on there. On this stall is a copper stove. A tiny four-year-old pays a tiny coin—a 'cash,' with a hole in the centre, so that it may be carried on a string, of which a hundred are worth only a penny. The smiling, blue-clad stallkeeper then hands his customer a blob of uncooked dough, and this the four-year-old then solemnly proceeds to cook for himself upon the copper stove. And while the dough cooks, the life of the toy city streams past the stall—the flower-seller, with his double burden of blossoms; the blind masseur, who goes to massage people after they have taken their evening dip in a bath that looks like a large flower-vase, and who toots on a

Japan

whistle as he goes ; the little policeman with a sword and a notebook almost too big for him to carry ; the wandering greengrocer, who sells sunflower-seeds and seaweed as well as cabbages, and whose radishes are the size of our vegetable-marrows. Many a Western traveller has wished that he could pack all these pretty toys in a huge trunk and then unpack them to cheer him up in some stern Western city, where houses are more than one story high and made of bricks instead of paper, where street-lamps are not gorgeous with painted beasts and flowers, and where grown-up people really *are* grown-up.

CHAPTER III

INDIA

IN one form or another, the word 'India' has been used by so many generations of Western people to describe a very vast and very wonderful Eastern country that it is curious to realize that in none of the one hundred and forty-seven languages spoken by the inhabitants of that country is there any single word which means to any of *them* exactly what 'India' means to all of *us*. In Sanskrit, the ancient literary language of the Indian Aryans, 'Sindhu' was the name of the famous river which Alexander the Great crossed with his army in 326 B.C. and which in our geography books is called the Indus. And from that river we have borrowed a name for that tremendous Empire, 1,000,766 square miles in extent, which stretches from the Pamirs in the north to Cape Comorin and Colombo in the south.

The navigators and explorers of the West were haunted by the idea of India about the time that Columbus and Cabot and Magellan were sailing strange and perilous seas. Many gallant ships perished in quest of the north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and whenever a bold seafarer found himself on an unknown shore he jumped to the conclusion that he had reached India, or some new half-way-house to that golden Empire. That is why the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of North America are—quite ridiculously—called 'Indians' to this day!

Every one who knows modern India well agrees that to see the true colours and to breathe the true atmosphere of the country the traveller must leave the great, busy cities of the coast behind him, and betake himself to the villages, where nothing has changed for hundreds of years. In cities like Calcutta and Bombay, East and West jostle and clash so queerly that the effect is almost bewildering. Bullock-waggons creak

India

across the tram-lines ; telegraph-wires hum above mysterious, narrow houses of carved and painted teak-wood with overhanging balconies and tiny grated windows ; electric arc-lamps throw their keen, blue glare upon the fretted niche where an image of an elephant-headed god sits in a fading necklace of marigolds. But in the country districts the *ryot*, or culti-



A HINDU BRASS-WORKER OF BENARES

vator, tills the soil just as his ancestors did before Alexander the Great crossed the Indus.

Let us pay an imaginary visit to a typical village in Western India. The chief street, an irregular line of low, mud houses with thatched roofs, is full of noise and movement, though the greater part of the population is out working in the fields of corn and maize, or among the plots of pumpkins and melons and pepper-canies that lie beyond. In the dry season of the year the fields and the houses are dusty and parched-looking, but when the wet season comes, that time of ' The Rains ' for which every one waits so eagerly, everything is changed, and in some districts the very *walls* of the mud huts suddenly clothe themselves with small-petalled, pink begonias and tufts

Book of Other Lands

of maiden-hair fern. At the door of his low-roofed dwelling squats the brazier, hammering away at a brass *lota*, or ceremonial washhand basin. Behind the houses two or three looms have been set up, the frames fixed between acacia-trees. As the weavers draw their shuttles through the blue and crimson threads, showers of yellow blossoms descend upon them. Spinning is done with a wheel called a *charka*, turned by the hand instead of being worked with a treadle like the spinning-wheel of the West. Indian nationalists are anxious that all Indians should resolve to wear garments spun upon the *charka* only, and never to use any fabric made with new-fangled machinery brought from other lands.

Upon the verandah of the principal house in the village crouches a travelling jeweller, making silver rupees into trinkets for the headman's wife. There is to be a wedding in the village soon, and she wants a pair of new anklets in honour of the occasion. The *lohar* is the blacksmith, but he does not



TELEGU DRUMMER

stand "under a spreading chestnut tree." His anvil is so low that he sits on the ground with one foot on either side of it, while he beats out a new iron pin for a wagon-wheel. Watching him stands a lithe, half-naked, bronze-coloured fellow, with a tall bamboo pole in his hand. This is the *mhar*, a useful person who runs errands, guides strangers, and skins any of the village cattle that happen to die. He is an 'outcaste,' as are all those who handle hides and leather. In the distance you see a lean and tattered figure bearing a long, gourd-shaped drum and making his way toward the house where the jeweller sits. This is the *mhang*, and he has come because he has heard that there is to be a wedding, and he knows that a drummer will be needed to make music for the guests.

On the outskirts of the village stands the holy pipul-tree, of which the scientific name is *Ficus religiosa*. Under the shadow of its blue-green, heavy leaves (which never wither or turn

India

yellow even in the driest season) sits the village priest, the *Josi*, with a scroll of queer-looking figures and calculations in his hand. This is an almanac, and he is making up his mind which date would be the luckiest for the wedding. Near the tank whence all the village women fetch water in big jars which they balance cleverly on their heads, the potter sits by his wheel, moulding the clay with deft touches from his half-closed hands. He has always plenty of work, because the little pots he makes for use as drinking-vessels are never used twice, but as he only charges about a penny a dozen for them, he does not grow rich however industrious he may be. The Hindu religion forbids a man to drink twice from the same cup or to eat twice from the same platter, so these pots are broken after use, and leaves are often made to do duty for plates at meal-time. The rest of the population of our village, including many of the women and children, is working in the fields. The younger workers help their mothers to weed while their fathers drive the dingy white oxen that draw the plough. Some feet above the ground, between the trunks of two withered trees, a thatched shelter has been built, and there a watchman is posted, to scare birds, or jackals, or wandering thieves, away from the crops.

Rice, millet and maize are the principal crops grown in the greater part of India, but pepper, sugar-cane, tobacco, tea, cotton, indigo, hemp, melons, and betel-nut palms are cultivated in many districts. The soil is fertile, when once it is well watered. Maize looks especially pretty growing, with its lofty green blades and its tufted plumes. Ball-pepper is trained to climb up poles, as hops are in England, and there its shiny bright-green pods dangle until they turn crimson. The tobacco-plants have heart-shaped leaves, more than a foot across, but they do not attain any great height. The leaf intended for the manufacture of cigars is longer and narrower, and dries a darker shade of brown. A plantation of betel-palms (*Areca catechu*) is a most charming sight, especially in the dry season, when the fields are parched and bare. These palms are tall and slender—as tall as forty, or even sixty, feet, and so slender that their average circumference is not more than twenty-four inches. The nuts are boiled, sliced, and

Book of Other Lands

dried in the sun. Sometimes the leaves also are pressed and dried. And then both nuts and leaves are used by Hindus much as chewing-gum is used by Americans. In the houses of the rich, betel-nut, wrapped in golden paper, is offered to guests upon silver trays, and it is considered exceedingly impolite to decline to take any. Even the poorest villager will probably have a pouchful concealed in the folds of his *dhoti*.

This *dhoti* is the chief—and very often the only—garment of the Hindu peasant. It consists of an ample loin-cloth of cotton, more or less white, which falls to the knees but leaves the upper part of the body bare. As three persons out of every four in India earn their living by cultivating the soil, it will be seen that the wearers of the *dhoti* are numerous, and that the prosperity of the whole Indian Empire really rests upon their industrious shoulders. This being so, it is a little curious that the Indian farmers seem to prefer old-fashioned, wearisome and disappointing methods of agriculture. For example, they often sow seed broadcast, instead of in furrows ; and if a ryot wants to level a field he lays a bamboo ladder on the ground, stands upon it, and makes three oxen drag him to and fro until the desired result is attained. Corn is threshed by a team of three oxen tethered to a post and driven round and round.

The fate of the Indian crops depends upon the south-western monsoon, and whether the rainy months, which correspond to our summer, really *are* rainy. If the rains fail, there is famine in the land, and great efforts are then made by the British authorities to relieve the distress of the people in the parched and hungry villages.

Beyond the fields with which the Indian village is surrounded lies the jungle, that matted, mysterious forest where many fierce and beautiful creatures live, most of whom are the enemies of man. Deep in its tangled shadows are oozy pools where tigers come to drink ; wild bees build their hives in its hollow trees, and there the brown bear comes, lumbering along on his hind-legs, to seek for the thick, dusty, dark-coloured wild honey. Monkeys swing and chatter overhead, leaping from branch to branch, or playing games among the heavy, juicy-

India

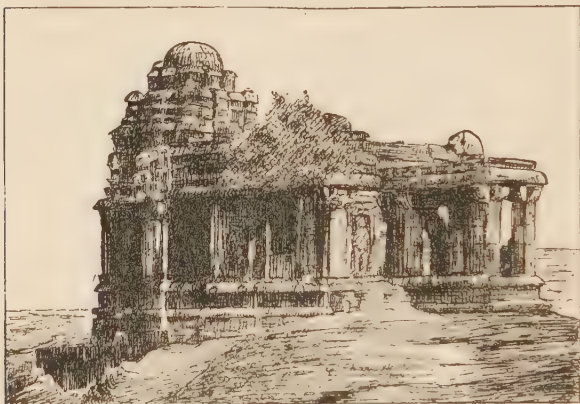
stemmed creepers that droop from the trees. And sometimes, after dark, something that looks like a big dog with pointed ears pads softly along the outer fringes of the fields. But it isn't a dog, and if it draws near the clustering huts, the flicker of a wood-cutter's fire is enough to send it scudding back into the forest. Every one who has read the *Jungle Books* knows as much about Indian wolves as though he were an Indian wolf himself! By day the jungle is almost silent, but after sunset it is full of weird murmurings and moanings. Then the villagers sometimes find it necessary to cheer themselves up by banging drums and blowing upon conch-shells. Many of the smaller children must be glad when the sun peeps over the green leaves of the pipul-tree and wakes the village, and it is time for the whole family to make their ceremonial ablutions in the lota, before the work of the day begins again.

The village of which we have had a glimpse is a Hindu village. That is to say, the people worship the ancient gods of India—and, most probably, one or two quaint godlings of their own. You noticed that the farmers wore the dhoti, that the priest sat under the holy pipul-tree, and that a brazen bowl was used for the ceremonies of morning worship. But if, instead of *nobody* wearing trousers, *everybody*, men and women, wore them, and if, instead of brass, the bowls and trays and lamps of the villagers were made of copper, you would know by these signs, as well as by others, that you were in the midst of a Mohammedan community. The religions of India are almost without number. Each district has its own legends, its own gods and devils, as well as the already numerous gods of the Hindu faith. But the Indian Mohammedans are faithful to the teaching of their Prophet, who declared that there was no God but Allah—the one great creator—and who forbade them to adorn their places of worship with images of gods, or beasts, or men. The result is a very striking contrast between the Hindu temples and the mosques raised by the followers of Mohammed—the temples teeming with gods and goddesses, some of them fearful to behold, the mosques lonely and austere, but gorgeous with inlaid marble and glazed tiles.

The ancient religion of India is called Brahminism. The

Book of Other Lands

word '*Brahm*' means prayer, and from that word comes the name of one of the three principal divinities—Brahma. The other two are Siva and Vishnu.¹ Brahma is depicted as a red- or gold-coloured semi-human figure, with three or four heads and never less than four arms; his favourite 'mount' is a



HINDU TEMPLE AT BIJAPUR

swan. Vishnu is a personification of the sun. Nine times has he visited the earth, and he will return a tenth time—in the form of a milk-white horse! The most powerful, and the most popular, of these three Hindu gods is Siva. He is a fearful-looking fellow, with five heads, each head having three eyes. So far had his fame spread in Old Testament times that the prophet Amos uttered a warning, lest the Jews should be led astray and tempted to bow down before this strangest of "strange gods." For Siva is the '*Chiun*' whose tabernacle the Israelites are accused of carrying, in the twenty-sixth verse of the fifth chapter of "the words of Amos."

Vishnu's consort is a beautiful and kindly goddess, Lakshmi by name, the patroness of the city of Bombay, but Siva's consort is a most alarming person, who rides on a tiger, and delights in blood-offerings. Under the name of Kali she is the 'godmother' of Calcutta, and throughout Eastern Bengal images of her are to be seen in the guise of a weird demon with long claws and blood-shot eyes. To these divinities, and to a vast army of others, great temples have been raised all over

¹ See *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*, by Sister Nivedita and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.

India

India. Some of these temples are now hollow ruins, where the monkeys scramble and chatter and the rock-pythons have their lonely lairs ; others are still gorgeous with gold and incense, and the scene of almost hourly worship and sacrifice.

To eyes accustomed to the pure and severe outlines of Greek temples, or the spires and domes of Western cathedrals, the holy buildings of Brahminism seem curiously formless and confused. They have towers and terraces and colonnades, but all clogged with carving. Teeming throngs of sculptured beings, gods and demons, kings and elephants, hide the form of the temple and leave the eyes of the beholder weary. Yet they have a weird splendour of their own, these mighty fanes, and no traveller who has felt its spell can ever wholly forget it.

One of the most important elements in the Brahmin religion is what is called the Caste system. Under this system people are divided into groups, according to their calling and that of their ancestors, each group being compelled to carry on unchanging traditions, and none being allowed to mingle with another. Outside these sharply-divided groups are the luckless folk who have no caste at all, the 'untouchables.' Those who *have* caste, the privileged Brahmin class, are naturally proud of it, and regard it as something to be very carefully preserved. They have to remember and to obey a most elaborate and—to us—bewildering set of rules, some of which may be broken by accident or quite unconsciously. If a Brahmin should be so unfortunate as to eat forbidden food, or be touched even by the shadow of an 'untouchable' person, he at once "loses caste," and to regain what he has lost he must undergo a severe process of purification, and pay a large sum of money to the priest of his temple. It may happen that a Brahmin is in charge of one of the wayside wells without which travellers upon Indian highroads would perish of thirst. To fellow-Brahmins he is always ready to be helpful ; but if an 'outcaste' approaches, and humbly craves permission to quench his thirst, the well-keeper takes a long bamboo pole and lets the water run down it, so that the shadow of the 'outcaste' shall not fall upon him, nor yet upon the well. If a Brahmin should be walking along a road and see an

Book of Other Lands

‘untouchable’ in the distance, he hastens to clap his hands loudly together, and the poor ‘untouchable’ hastens to get out of his way, remaining hidden till the sacred person of the Brahmin is out of sight.

To make it quite clear to every one that he *is* a Brahmin, and also to give fair warning to his less-favoured countrymen to remove themselves from his path, every Hindu who has the right to do so wears an unmistakable caste-mark, traced in white earth, charred sandal-wood, red ochre, or ashes, in the centre of his forehead. Siva-worshippers trace this mark horizontally, Vishnu-worshippers, perpendicularly. The head is shaved, save for a top-knot, concealed by the cap or turban.

The costume of the Hindu women is exceedingly graceful, and, except that the more fortunate among them wear silken fabrics and many jewels, it is practically the same in all classes. Over a long, loose skirt they wear a sleeveless bodice, over this again is draped the *sari*, a long strip of cotton or silk cloth, one half of which is wound round the waist, whence it hangs in folds to the feet, while the other half is brought up over the head and thrown across the left shoulder. When a Hindu lady of high degree is arrayed for some great festival she tinkles and sparkles with jewels. You may imagine her, a slight and supple figure, her smooth dark hair parted on the brow and hanging in three knotted plaits behind. Her underskirt is of dull blue silk embroidered in silver, her sleeveless bodice is of green, thickly adorned with gold thread. On her ankles and her bare toes are clashing and clinking rings of silver and gold. In the centre of her forehead is a diamond ornament, from which fall on either side ropes of pearls and turquoise. Round her neck she wears no less than four necklaces, one of diamonds, one of pearls with an emerald pendant, one of diamonds and turquoise, and one of silver filigree. Her bracelets are so numerous that she herself might have some difficulty in counting them; but the ornament of which she is most proud is her nose-ring, which is a thin hoop of gold about four inches in diameter enriched with a cluster of gems at one side. Over her head, and falling almost to her heels, is a veil of rose-coloured gauze with a heavy hem of gold.





A BOOKSELLER'S STALL IN A LUCKNOW BAZAAR

Photo E.N.A.

India

The dress of an Indian prince is surely one of the most picturesque and magnificent in the world ; and, of course, the most magnificent item in it is the turban, of finest silk shot through with golden threads, and crested by an osprey trembling with diamonds. The turban, in one form or another, is worn by both Hindus and Moslems (Mohammedans). Hindus arrange theirs in a great variety of odd ways, sometimes bunched on the top of the head, sometimes with a loop leaning to one side, sometimes with long ends dangling down. Among the Moslems the turban is more tightly wound, and covers the whole head, usually being crossed upon the forehead from right to left. Caps of many forms are worn, especially by Moslems. One of the most picturesque of these is the *Irani kullah*, the Persian cap, of goat-skin. The Parsees, the sun-worshipping community whose stronghold is in Bombay, wear embroidered caps indoors, and outdoors a quaint kind of high hat, something like the cocked hat of Napoleon, made of glazed chintz.



A BOY PRINCE OF INDIA

Lurking here and there, in lonely forests and wild glens, there are queer, stunted, dark-skinned tribes, who wear neither turbans nor chintz hats, and whose favourite headdress is a pair of arrows with poisoned tips. These are the Bhils and Gonds, descendants of the primitive people who once possessed the whole of India, but who were subdued, and driven to the east and north by the lighter-skinned Aryans who descended from the north-western passes beyond the Indus in the very dawn of Indian history. Much can be learnt about these more civilized invaders from the *Rig-Veda*, their national literature, an ancient and wonderful collection of songs and legends. There we see that about one thousand four hundred years

Book of Other Lands

before Christ these Aryans had reached a pitch of civilization which made goldsmiths, barbers, and blacksmiths necessary. They fought from chariots, and quaffed a sort of beer made from a plant of the milkweed family called '*soma*.' Women were held in great honour among them, and some of the most beautiful hymns in the *Rig-Veda* were composed by royal ladies of those far-off days.

The first Mohammedan invasion of India took place in A.D. 664, only a little more than thirty years after the death of the Prophet, and again, in 977, a wave of Moslem conquerors surged eastward from Persia and Arabia. But it was not until the sixteenth century that Baber, the first of the Great Moghuls, established himself at Agra, and founded a dynasty which reigned with amazing splendour for more than two hundred years. One of the greatest of the Moghuls was Baber's great-grandson, Akbar, who built for himself at Sikandra, near Agra, a tomb which is still one of the marvels of Asia—a vast palace of pale marble, with pillared cloisters and lace-like casements of fretted stone. Akbar means 'Greatest'; but on the carven sarcophagus above his tomb this proud prince caused to be inscribed not once, but many times, "*Allah Akbar*" (God is Greatest), and "*Jalal Jalalahu*" (May His Glory Shine).

From Persia these Moslem conquerors brought with them the art of gardening, and to this day many beautiful gardens remain which they planned and planted in India. One of these is the Nishat Bagh, in Kashmir, with its foaming silver fountains and waterfalls, its vivid masses of asters and lilies, zinnias and roses, shaded by fluttering poplars and silver-barked chenar-trees laden with dark shaggy leaf.

Another art which these conquerors introduced into their new domains was the art of glazing tiles in gorgeous colours. With these tiles they encased their mosques and sepulchres, as may be seen at Mooltan, where the tomb of Yussuf Gadez glitters with intense blue, inky-blue and turquoise-blue, upon a background of pure white.

At the court of Akbar and his successors art was encouraged and artists were nobly rewarded. What is known as the

India

Moghul School of Painting produced many masterpieces on a small scale, exquisite miniatures, few more than a foot square, representing the monarchs, their pastimes, and their pets. Colour and form are perfect—only perspective is lacking. From one of these pictures we can get a very good idea of the personal appearance of these Persian princes, who were as splendid to behold as any hero of any fairy-tale. Akbar's grandson, Shah Jehan, in particular, was an amazing fellow. You see him standing on the flowery turf in scarlet slippers gay with gold thread, close-fitting trousers of white-and-gold brocade, matching his tight, long-sleeved jacket ; from his waist hangs a sort of petticoat, quaintly stiff and wide, of transparent gauze, upon which droop the ends of his fringed and embroidered sash. On his head is a curious, flat, purple turban, projecting a little behind, encircled with a string of pearls, and tipped with a jewelled plume. It is almost impossible to count the number of necklaces and bracelets he wears ; the artist has painted them all most conscientiously, and you can see the blood-red glint of the rubies, the dazzling green of the emeralds, the pale shimmer of the pearls. And the centre of all this magnificence is not a proud or haughty-looking personage, but a quiet, middle-aged gentleman with a longish nose, a small peaked beard, and thoughtful dark eyes.

It is Shah Jehan to whom India owes the most beautiful and the most famous monument of Moghul art, the Taj Mahal, the garden-tomb planned by him on the shores of the river Jumna, near Agra, as the last resting-place of his dearly-loved consort, Arjumand Banu, more often called Mumtaz Mahal, the " Crown of the Palace." The approach to the Taj is through an archway of black-and-white inlaid marble, bearing an Arabic inscription inviting whosoever is pure of heart to enter into the Gardens of Paradise. Beyond you see a long canal, flanked by slender, dusky cypress-trees, and, at the farther-end, the Taj itself, with its great pearl-coloured dome tipped by a golden iris-flower, its airy minarets and its cluster of smaller domes seeming more " like the baseless fabric of a vision " than the work of human hands. Yet twenty thousand crafts-

Book of Other Lands

men laboured upon it for more than twenty years. The gardens which Shah Jehan planted round the tomb of the beautiful Mumtaz are still fair with a thousand flowers. In spring they are covered by a mantle of streaked tulips, Madonna lilies, bluebells, daffodils, and the deep blue irises that were brought first from the hills of Kashmir. Mumtaz must have loved flowers well, for Shah Jehan ordained not only that the earth round the Taj should blossom for ever in remembrance of her, but also that the tomb itself should be encircled by never-fading flowers whose petals are of sardonyx and turquoise, coral and lapis-lazuli, jasper and other semi-precious stones. There, within screens of pearl-white marble so exquisitely carved that it seems like frozen lace, he sleeps his last sleep at the side of the beautiful Arjumand Banu.

Lovely though the Taj Mahal be, it is not purely or characteristically Indian. All Moghul architecture is influenced by Moslem ideas, by the dome and the minaret, and by the Moslem commandment, "Thou shalt make unto thyself no graven image." Very different are the temples of Benares, the sacred city of the Hindu faith, built upon a river, the Ganges, which in the eyes of two out of every three Indians is marvellously holy, and whose waters can bring salvation both to the living and the dead. Here pilgrims of all ages throng from all parts of India ; here pious people bring the bodies of their friends to be burned at the Burning Ghauts on the brink of the Ganges and afterward committed to its purifying waves. Pilgrimages are timed according to the phases of the moon, and if there should be an eclipse of either the sun or the moon there is much excitement at Benares. The priests tell the people that a huge snake is trying to swallow the heavenly orb, and that only by many sacrifices and ceremonies can the peril be averted. When the eclipse passes, the people are much impressed by the power of their priests, and very grateful to them for exercising it to such good purpose.

It must not be thought that all the Hindu priests wilfully or knowingly deceive the simple folk. They themselves are nearly as simple. Many of them make long and weary journeys on foot, in order to look upon the holy river. A

India

priest who has resolved to go on a pilgrimage to Benares often takes a vow of silence, and swears that no word shall pass his lips until he reaches his goal. He halts at every wayside shrine, and mutely implores the god whose image it contains to speed him on his way. Passers-by halt too, when they see that he has hung a wreath of marigolds round the neck of the god, and that he is preparing to burn a cake of cow-dung in a little saucer before the shrine. When, with the aid of that very Western invention, a safety match, he has reduced the cake to ashes, he first smears his own forehead with it, and then the foreheads of any pious onlookers who beg him to do so.

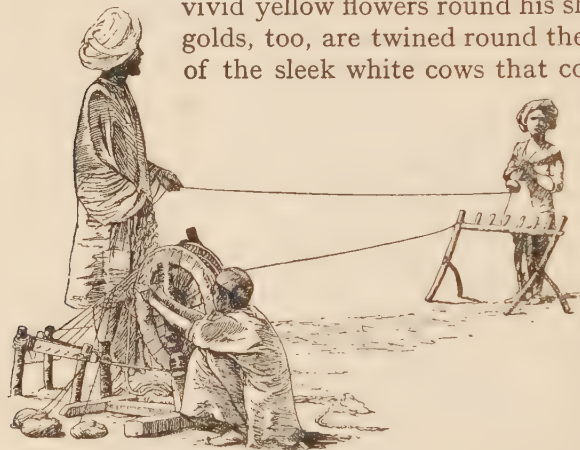
Whole families sometimes proceed to Benares together, camp out among seething crowds of fellow-pilgrims on the bank of the river, and rise in the cool golden dawn to bathe in the river itself or in one of the walled pools which are regarded as almost more holy. The favourite is the Ear-ring pool, so called because the god Diva is said to have dropped his ear-ring into it one day, and its surface is always thickly filmed with petals from the garlands flung there by the faithful. Not all the pilgrims come on foot. Many make the journey by train, and thus again the East and the West are queerly brought together. The Western traveller realizes that he is truly in the East when his train stops at a country station and he sees a band of very tame and very well-nourished monkeys scrambling across the platform for the fragments of banana thrown to them by the passengers.

When, either by the long dusty highroad or the fearsome railway, the pilgrims reach Benares, they find themselves in a city of temples—vast, red-coloured temples encrusted with carven gods and demons. In one, dedicated to the fierce goddess Durga (another name for ‘Kali’), thousands of monkeys make their home, and graciously receive the offerings of the pious, while in another dwells a large family of peacocks, beautiful, honoured, and holy. Outside, the main streets are flanked by rows of open stalls where you may buy the finest brass-work—bowls, spoons, incense-burners, and images of gods. Between these shining golden stalls flows an unending, many-coloured stream of pilgrims, some carrying bundles of

Book of Other Lands

bedding, some carrying babies, others helping to bear a tottering elder toward the sacred Ganges. Very welcome is the arrival of the *bhisti* (pronounced 'beastie'), the water-seller, with his bulging skinful of Ganges water.

The air is heavy with the scent of marigolds, for there is hardly a pilgrim, young or old, who has not a garland of these vivid yellow flowers round his shoulders. Marigolds, too, are twined round the polished horns of the sleek white cows that come and go un-



NATIVES SPINNING COTTON

afraid, and do not hesitate to snatch a mouthful from the green-grocer's stall. They know, these sacred cows, that *they* will always have enough to eat, that *they* will never

have to plough, or thresh, or keep a water-wheel turning all day, whatever may be the lot of their less-fortunate relations in the fields beyond the city.

Four miles or so from Benares is a place called Sarnath, which to many millions of people outside India is a holier spot than any of the numberless mosques and temples of that amazing country. It was in the Deer Park at Sarnath that Buddha began to preach his new creed of unselfishness six hundred years before Christ was born into the world.

Kapilavastu, the place of his birth, where his father held sway as chieftain over the Sākya clan, has long since been blotted out by the Nepalese jungle, but to more than four hundred and seventy million of his faithful followers every place that was once associated with his stainless life and his gentle philosophy is sacred to this day. Kapilavastu is no more, and the Bo-tree at Sarnath, under which he sat to

India

meditate and to teach, has withered, but the great grey mountains of Rajahgriya, where he spent five years in solitary self-communion, and Kusinagara, where he died, are still holy ground. And there is in Ceylon an ancient tree, propped up by pillars, but still putting forth leaves every year—a tree which was planted as a cutting from Buddha's Bo-tree at Benares in the third century B.C.

The word '*Buddha*' means 'the Enlightened One': but it was not the first name by which the great teacher was known. His family name was Gautama, and his personal name, by which his father and mother called him, was Siddartha. Marvellous legends grew up about his birth and childhood. The earth, it was said, blossomed into a thousand flowers to make a cradle for the new-born babe, and a stream of crystal-clear water sprang from a dry rock to fill his first bath! An aged, saintly man, Asita by name, heard songs of joy among the clouds as he sat in meditation under the pipul-tree, and knew that the spirit of heavenly wisdom had been born in human flesh, and went and knelt in worship before the child and his mother. When Siddartha was only eight years old, he astonished the learned man appointed to give him his first lessons in writing and counting; for when his tutor told him to take his tablet of sandal-wood and trace upon it the words which he would dictate, the small boy proceeded to write them in a dozen different languages; and when they came to arithmetic, he calmly reeled off all the various numerals with which the stars are numbered, land is measured, and mustard and barley are weighed. After this it is hardly surprising to hear that at the age of eighteen he excelled all the suitors who were contending for the hand of the lovely princess Yasôdhara, drew a bow which none of them could even bend, shot an arrow so far that no eye could follow its flight, and cut through two talas-trees with such a clean stroke of his sword that for a moment the trunks stood upright and his rivals thought he had failed.

What is really interesting and curious about the beginnings of the faith which Buddha built up is that it was joy, and not sorrow, which led him to ponder upon the mysteries of life and death. Great grief has turned the thoughts of many men to

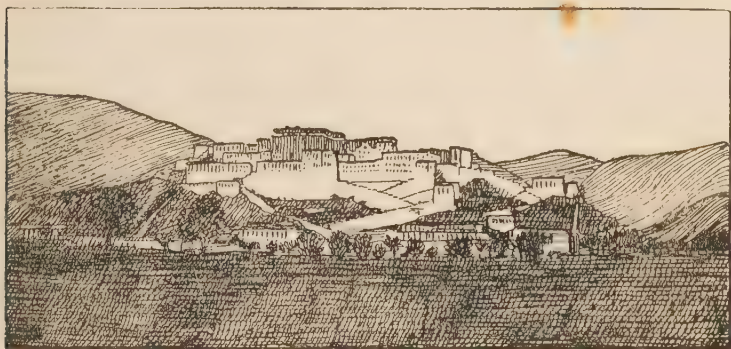
Book of Other Lands

these things, but young Siddartha had known none but happy hours when he took the desperate resolve to give up everything that had made those hours happy, to leave his father, his bride, his baby son and his worldly riches, and go forth, with only his faithful charioteer, Channa, to bear him company, and lead a life of hardship and meditation among the five hills of Rajahgriya. Thoughtful men, weary of the multitude of fantastic godlets worshipped by the mass of the people, had already sought enlightenment sometimes in lonely musing on those stern heights. But to none had it been given, and after a time Siddartha decided that they and he were seeking it where it would never be found. He had to pass through many hours of intense discouragement and sadness before any ray of spiritual light fell upon him. Then, at last, as he sat under the green shadow of the Bo-tree, it suddenly seemed to him that he understood everything that had puzzled and saddened him before, and that he had found a path along which he could lead his people to a purer and more noble faith than the priests who served the fierce and foolish gods of the old religion could ever teach them. The chief lesson that Buddha learnt and taught was summed up six hundred years after his death in the divine words, "Whosoever seeketh his life shall lose it." He saw, and he had the courage to say, that selfishness is the greatest of all evils, and the root of almost all the pain and sorrow in the world. Therefore, according to his religion, self must be subdued and blotted out ; the soul must be dedicated to higher things, to Right Thoughts, Right Hopes, Right Speech, Right Efforts, and Right Deeds. Then, at last, it would have its reward in the absolute peace of Nirvana, beyond the sounds and shadows of the visible world.

Buddhism spread rapidly throughout Asia. The hearts of men were touched, as never before, by this strange, simple, kindly teaching. But the priests and the worshippers of the old fierce gods were filled with fury and alarm. And so it befell that by the eleventh century of the Christian era the old gods were "enjoying their own again" in the land where Buddha lived and died. Two great forces combined to thrust Buddhism out of the land of its birth : the natural instinct of

India

the ignorant people to cling to the childish beliefs which they were better able to understand, and the successive invasions of Mohammedan conquerors from the north-west. At last the pure faith of Buddha was buried and hidden, like Kapilavastu, from the eyes of men ; the images of Gautama were overthrown ; the golden shrines of Siva, the blood-stained altars of Kali, the glittering blue domes of the Moslems, rose from the earth that had once been trodden by his feet. But in other lands, lands that he never saw, lands, some of them,



THE BUDDHA-LA OF LHASA

The temples and palace of the Dalai-Lama

that he never heard of, China, Japan, Ceylon, Siberia, Thibet, the Malay Peninsula, and many islands of the East Indies, he is remembered and loved, and the way that he traced is humbly—and often imperfectly—followed. It survives in its purest form in Ceylon, the fragrant isle that hangs “like a pearl on the brow of India.” But there, as elsewhere, legends and ceremonies have gathered round Buddha which would greatly astonish him if he could return to earth. At Kandy, in Ceylon, for instance, there is a famous temple where pilgrims wend to gaze upon the Holy Tooth—a tooth an inch-and-a-half long, which certainly never grew in any mortal jaw.

In Thibet, they believe that Buddha *does* return to earth from time to time, in the person of the Dalai-Lama, the head of all the Thibetan monasteries, a powerful and mysterious high-priest whom the people reverence just as Roman Catholics

Book of Other Lands

reverence the Pope. Thibetan monks are called *lamas*, and their monasteries, or *lamasseries*, are perched on dizzy precipices among the highest mountains in the world. Until quite recently no Europeans had penetrated to their chief stronghold, Lhasa, and to go there is still one of the most perilous journeys that any stout-hearted traveller can undertake. High above the lamasseries tower the silver snows of the Himalayas ; far below, in narrow gorges shagged with junipers and pines, the foot of man falls so seldom that the deer and the other wild creatures are tame and trustful, and come regularly to be fed by the Buddhist hermits who have sought refuge there. At the doors of the lamasseries hang stuffed oxen, swaying in the wind. These are intended to scare away evil spirits, and it is for the same purpose that the lamas bang their great bronze gongs so often and so loudly during their devotions. But they are simple and courteous folk, deeply learned in the lore of their faith, and some of them can draw marvellous pictures on silk, with brushes and Chinese ink, showing the Wheel of Things, the whole circle of human life, and how the soul may escape from it into the infinite peace of Nirvana.

The gorgeous principalities on the Kashmir frontier were the first home of a game which most Indian princes play to this day, and which has become a favourite sport with many Western cavaliers—the game of polo. It is said that to see *real* polo you *must* go to India, where the game is faster and keener, and players and ponies are swifter and more skilful, than anywhere else in the world. Another Indian sport which appeals strongly to the Western sportsman is pig-sticking. And it sounds very exciting. The quarry is the lean, fierce grey boar, the only beast in the jungle of whom the tiger himself is afraid, and the horseman who pursues him, lance in hand, must have a quick eye, a powerful wrist, and nerves of iron, if he, and not the pig, is to win the day. Yet another Indian sport, and perhaps the most famous of all, is tiger-shooting. Sometimes the tiger is shot from a *machan*, a sort of platform, made of interwoven branches, high up in a tree ; but it is considered better sport, more dangerous and more thrilling, to shoot from a *howdah*, on the back of a specially

India

trained elephant that can be trusted, the wise beast, not to run away—unless the tiger leaps straight on to his trunk. It was from the back of an elephant that King George shot the fine tiger that now glares at the beholder from a glass case in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington.

The elephant has played a great part in Indian history from very early times. Ganesa, one of the lesser gods of the vast Hindu pantheon, is depicted with the head of one of these quaint and clever animals, and there are elephants carved in red sandstone, in teak-wood, in ivory and in ebony, throughout the palaces and temples of India. A rajah's state elephant is a marvellous sight to see, with its wrinkled grey hide painted in bright colours, its howdah dangling with fringes of silver and gold, and its *mahout*, or driver, wearing his most magnificent turban and wielding an *ankus* (an elephant goad) set with precious stones.

Though elephants in their wild state are much less numerous nowadays than they were even a hundred years ago in India, the dense forests of Assam and Travancore are still the homes of large herds of them. The method by which they are captured and tamed is both perilous and interesting. Two large stockades are made, one many acres in extent and one a little less than an acre. When everything is ready, the wild elephants are rounded up and driven, quietly and gradually at first, into the outer stockade. Then, to the sound of fog-horns, fireworks, and drums, they are stampeded into the smaller enclosure, which is called the *keddah*. Now comes the time when the native trappers and tamers are aided in their work by elephants already tame. These are called *koomkies*, or helpers, and they are uncannily intelligent. One koomkie will come up on either side of a rebellious and bewildered captive, and jam him between them while their mahouts hobble him with ropes, and if the end of a rope falls, a supple trunk will slide down and seize it and give it back to the man who let it fall. When the newcomers have been made quiet by hunger, the koomkies take them down to the drinking-pools. And at every stage in the education of the wild elephant his human tutors are ably assisted by tame members of his own tribe.

Book of Other Lands

So marvellous is the intelligence of the elephant, and so perfect the understanding between his mahout and himself, sometimes a whispered word, or the lightest touch of hand or heel, is enough to make the big beast understand what his driver wants him to do.

Lord Frederic Hamilton relates in one of his books an amusing example of the quick response of an elephant to a hint from the mahout. This elephant was of the feminine gender, and her name was Chota Begum—'Little Lady.' She had the prettiest manners imaginable, and to the Englishman upon her back it seemed as if it must be the easiest thing in the world to guide such a gentle, obedient creature. So Lord Frederic began to think that he would very much like to try ! Now there are few things that a mahout dislikes more than being asked to allow a white man to take his place on the elephant's neck, but Chota Begum's mahout dared not refuse. So Lord Frederic had his wish—or, at least, he very *nearly* had it. He fixed himself as securely as he could upon Chota Begum's neck, with his feet in the straw stirrups just behind her ears, and took the heavy ankus in one hand. The mahout and several of the mahout's friends watched from the shelter of the trees to see how the white man would fare. Before he slid down from his wonted perch Chota Begum's mahout must have whispered a word of might into one of her big, flapping ears, for when, at last, her new rider succeeded in persuading her to start, she began to walk determinedly in a circle, round, and round, and round, and nothing that he could say or do would induce her either to come to a halt or to go straight on.

Was this the gentle, obedient Chota Begum ? As he found himself carried round in that seemingly never-ending circular march, Lord Frederic must have begun to wonder if it could really be she. And presently, from the green dusk of the trees, he caught a gurgle of suppressed laughter, which gradually swelled into a roar as Chota Begum continued to revolve. It is a sound that few white men have heard, for it takes a most extraordinary joke to stir a mahout to loud laughter, and he is usually regarded as a very serious and stately person indeed.

CHAPTER IV

PERSIA

PERSIAN cats and Persian carpets—we all know how beautiful they are, more beautiful than the cats and carpets of any other country in the world! And most of us have wished, at one time or another, that we might behold Persia with our own eyes. We have dreamed of it as a land of flowers and golden minarets, where warriors wear silver mail and peaked helmets inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The poetry of Omar Khayyám is full of scattered rose leaves. Tom Moore has sung in *Lalla Rookh* about the fragrant nutmeg groves haunted by humming birds, pools where blue lilies float, and hills of crystal, and how in Khorassan

Flowerets and fruits blush over every stream.

We know that it was Persia that Milton had in mind when he wrote of “the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind,” these realms

. . . where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

and we know that the Persian kings were very powerful fellows indeed, who almost broke the might of Greece and were the first to put up a successful defence against the incursions of Rome.

But if our desire be fulfilled, and we really find ourselves one day in the ancient kingdom of Darius and Xerxes, it is possible that our first impression may be one of intense disappointment. We arrive in Teheran, and we look eagerly round in quest of the beautiful colours which we expected to see—and we see none, perhaps, but grey and brown. The word ‘khaki,’ which was heard so often a few years since, is a Persian word, meaning ‘like mud,’ and it is a word which might describe only too well the appearance of the streets of Teheran, and of many other Persian towns, to say nothing of the great, bare desert which

Book of Other Lands

stretches right across the country from the north-west to the south-east, cutting the two groups of fertile provinces asunder.

It is no doubt a little disappointing to go for your first walk through grey streets thronged by grey- or brown-clad people, but if you are patient, you will be rewarded, for there is still plenty colour and much beauty in this land whose own children love it so well that they call it 'the Centre of the Universe.'

You will soon find other hues beside those of dust and mud



A GATE OF TEHERAN

if you look round you in Teheran. The domes and minarets of the mosques and the twelve gates of the city are cased in brightly-glazed tiles—blue, yellow, black and white—only, unfortunately, when some of these tiles drop out nobody takes the trouble to put them back again, with the result that both the mosques and the gates have a somewhat battered and shabby look when you draw near them. Many of the principal streets are bordered with plane-trees or poplars; but a drive along any of them is rather a risky business, as holes are dug in the middle of the roadway in order to obtain fresh supplies of mud for building purposes. The houses are built of mud in

Persia

the form of unbaked bricks, and have no windows opening on to the street. The larger houses are built round a paved courtyard, in the centre of which there will probably be a fountain or a pool, flanked by rose trees. Every house of any importance is divided into two sections, the *birouni*, or men's quarters, where the master passes most of his time when indoors, transacts his business and entertains his men-friends,



PERSIAN HORSE CONVOY

and the *anderoun*, where the ladies of the family live in the strictest seclusion, as befits inferior beings like themselves !

The gloomy appearance of the streets is partly due to the fact that neither the women nor the soldiers whom one sees there are clad in pretty or cheerful colours. The women are shrouded from head to foot in a shapeless black garment called a *chadar*, which conceals their loose trousers of green or purple hue. The soldiers—poor things—used to wear until quite recently tattered and faded uniforms, made of a sort of sackcloth, and adorned with deplorable buttons, bearing the Lion and Sun

Book of Other Lands

emblem of Persia but tarnished and half-effaced. On their heads they wore the characteristic Persian headdress, the high *kullah*, in this case formed of felt on a pasteboard foundation, and having in front a forlorn brass badge bearing the national emblem. Instead of boots they usually had sandals of once-white linen, and, though they carried long daggers in their belts and rifles slung across their shoulders, you could not imagine a less warlike-looking set of men than these shambling, untidy warriors of the Shah. And the military bands were not a whit more impressive, for the performers, whose ages might range from twelve to sixty, did not distribute their instruments according to the height of the bandsmen, with the result that you might see a small boy struggling with a huge trombone while a plump senior had nothing larger than a flute!

European influence has led some better-class Persians to



PERSIAN NATIONAL COSTUME

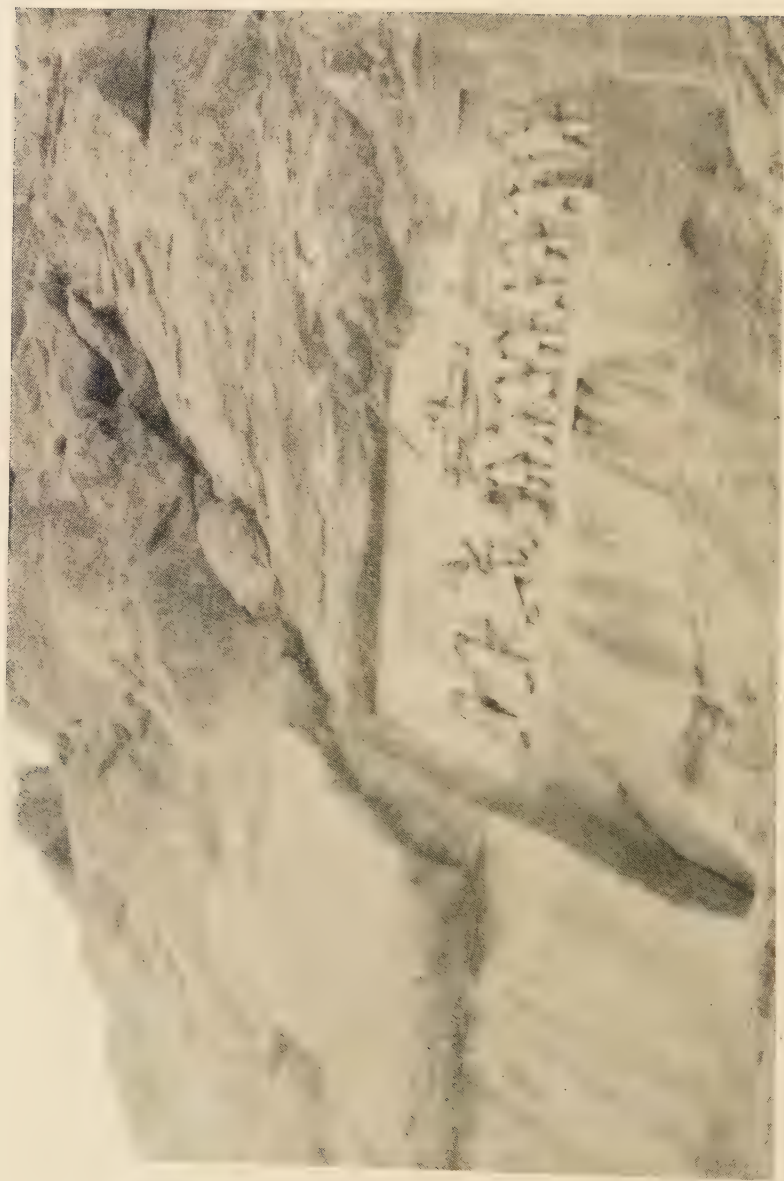
abandon their national dress in favour of tight trousers, frock-coats, and—what seems most odd—elastic-sided boots. How much more charming their former costume was we may judge for ourselves if we come across a countryman of theirs who has not adopted the ideas of the *Feringhi*—the 'Franks,' as Moslems call all Europeans. He will wear an unstarched white shirt, finely embroidered at the neck, and loose trousers of white, blue, or crimson. Over the shirt is the *arkhalik*, a collarless garment of quilted chintz or printed cotton, with long sleeves, buttoned from elbow to wrist with small metal buttons, which in summer are left unfastened. Above this comes the *kamarchin* or tunic of cloth, silk, satin, shawl-fabric from

Kashmir or Kerman, or velvet embroidered in gold, cut so as to leave the shirt visible. The length of the *kamarchin* denotes the



THE MOSQUE AT KERMANSHAH

Photo B. Avezathe



ROCK CARVINGS AT BISITUN

These were executed 2500 years ago to commemorate the victories of Darius

Persia

rank of the wearer. Courtiers, army-officers and state-officials wear it very short ; merchants, priests, doctors and lawyers wear it very long. Over this again is worn the *kulijah* coat, of cloth, shawl or camel-hair, often lined with fur, but in summer either discarded altogether or carried across the shoulder. The climate of Persia is so varied that, as Cyrus the Great once remarked, people at one end of the country may be shivering while those at the other end are panting in the heat. Cold rather than heat, however, is the rule in the great Persian plateau which, rising between the valleys of the Indus and the Tigris to a height of four to eight thousand feet above the sea-level, covers an area of more than a million square miles. The air is exquisitely clear and invigorating there, but the traveller must be prepared, according to the season, for fierce storms of dust or snow, and the native has much reason to tuck himself up in his *nimtan*, or sheepskin jacket, while the shepherds cling to the *yapanjah*, a tremendously thick, shaggy garment which serves them for both bed and bedding.

Both turbans and caps are to be seen in the streets of a Persian town. White turbans are favoured by the *mollahs*, or priestly class, and if you see one of green or very deep blue you may be certain that the wearer is a *seyid*, a descendant of Mohammed. Merchants usually choose muslin turbans embroidered in colours. The kullah, the typical Persian brimless hat or cap, is made of felt or of Persian lamb, and in the case of the Shah, or some very important personage, may be adorned in the centre with one beautiful diamond, or a clasp of precious stones. In accordance with the commands of the Prophet, the Persian never shaves off his moustache, and after the age of forty does not even clip his beard, which he combs piously as part of his daily devotions. Dandies of the lower classes cultivate a long lock of hair curving backward on either side of the face from the forehead to the ears, and these locks they constantly curl and pat and twist into shape. The upper-class Persian also has a long lock, called a *kakul*, but it is hidden by his turban or his cap. The purpose for which this two-foot tress is left growing on the crown of an otherwise shaven head sounds rather startling to non-Moslem ears. It is to enable

Book of Other Lands

the angels of the Mohammedan faith to lift him up into the Paradise prepared by the Prophet for his followers—a marvellous Paradise, where rivers of milk flow through gardens always green and blooming, where trees are laden with every sort of delicious fruit, and where the True Believer will disport himself for ever, to the sound of sweet singing from innumerable damsels of amazing beauty.

The rewards promised by Mohammed are so dazzling to simple-minded people that it is hardly surprising to find that in Persia, as in all other Mohammedan countries, great pains are taken to obey all the commands of the Prophet, and the study of the Koran, the Moslem bible, is the basis of all education among the learned classes. As the Koran is written in Arabic, a language which the teacher himself may not understand very well, a boy's lessons consist chiefly in learning by heart long passages which are to him a meaningless string of sounds. The pupils squat on their heels round the *mollah*, swaying themselves to and fro as they recite. Learning to write is an even more serious matter, for the boy has neither table nor desk. He must hold the paper on the palm of his left hand, and write on it with a reed-pen dipped in Indian ink. Should he prove lazy or inattentive, he is made to 'eat sticks'—that is to say, to undergo the punishment of the *bastinado*. The victim lies flat on his back, his feet are raised and tied to a pole supported between trestles, and on the soles of his feet he receives a certain number of blows from a knotted lash.

The *mollah* is, as a rule, a serious-minded and respectable person who really has spent many years of his youth studying, if not always understanding, the Koran. A very different type of fellow is the Dervish, a sort of wandering friar who goes about the country collecting alms, selling talismans, and telling stories. Sometimes he plods on foot, sometimes he bestrides a yak, a very quaint-looking mount for a pious traveller. He has a conical felt cap embroidered with texts from the Koran, and wears a panther- or wolf-skin over his shoulder, and robes of very doubtful whiteness, which are supposed to express the holiness of his life. The rest of his 'luggage' consists of a wooden staff studded with nails, a

Persia

gourd or a coconut shell in which to collect alms, a wooden rosary dangling from a girdle of cords, and a ram's horn, on which he blows loud blasts to announce that he is coming. He never trims his hair or his beard, and believes that dirtiness is next to godliness. Also he is often dazed or excited by the effects of opium or *hashish*. This last is an intoxicating drug made from hemp, and from its Arabic name comes our Western word 'assassin,' because in Syria, in the eleventh century, there was a gang of murderous fanatics who worked themselves into a frenzy with the aid of this hashish. The Persian name for it is *Bhang*. During religious festivals, such as *No Ruz* (the New Year) a Dervish will often pitch a little tent before the gateway of a rich man's house, and make an absurd little garden round it with pebbles, twigs and dust. For the first few days of the festival he is more or less quiet, and offers polite greetings to the members of the household who pass in and out. But if he does not receive gifts as many or as generous as he expected, he becomes exceedingly noisy, tooting on his horn night and day, and making the air ring with his yells of "*Hak, hak*" ('Truth, truth') and "*Allah-Akbar*" ('God is Greatest') until the master of the house is only too glad to purchase peace at the cost of a handsome present to his unwelcome though holy visitor.

Moharram is the first month of the Mohammedan year, and during the first ten days no True Believer will fail to fast and pray, for that month is to him what Lent is to the Christian. But during the *whole* month of *Ramazan*, which is the ninth in his calendar, he must fast from sunrise to sunset. The tragic event which pious Persians commemorate during the month of *Moharram* is the murder of Husein, grandson of the Prophet, at Kerbela, on the Euphrates. All the people dress in black, and go about beating their breasts with loud thuds, wailing aloud, and shedding real tears. On the tenth day this universal woe reaches its highest pitch, and long processions stream through the streets, to the cry of "*Husein is dead!*" Hence the Persian equivalent of the proverb "to cry out before you are hurt" is, "to begin to weep before the story of Husein's death is begun."

Book of Other Lands

In the courtyards of the houses of the rich, and also in a huge open-air theatre called a *takieh*, this tragedy is enacted before vast crowds of excited and tearful people during the month of Moharram. No other theatrical performances are ever given in Persia, but these chronicle-plays, in fifty-two episodes, depicting the sufferings of Mohammed's grandsons, are acted with much enthusiasm, and last for several days. The stage-properties are very simple; a silver jug full of water represents the river Tigris, while lion-skins and a heap of chaff do duty for the Arabian desert, but some of the players wear gorgeous coats of mail in silver and gold, golden helmets, or huge turbans of brilliant green.

The last episode of all shows the Patriarchs and Prophets of Islam rising from their graves on the Day of Judgment. The archangel Gabriel orders Mohammed to hand the key of Paradise to Husein, and the Prophet obeys, saying to his grandson: "Deliver from torment every one who in his lifetime shed even a single tear for thy sake." The end of the performance shows a group of joyful sinners entering Paradise, thanks to the goodwill of Husein. No wonder every one in the *takieh* sheds floods of tears!

The typical Persian is, indeed, a very excitable person, quick-witted, vivacious, and intelligent. He has been called the Frenchman of the East, but this is hardly fair to the real Frenchmen of the West, for he lacks that sense of balance and proportion, that love of logic, so characteristic of the French. The Persian is very easy-going. Two favourite sayings of his are: "*Firdah Inshallah*" ('To-morrow, please God') and "*Aib ne dared*" ('It doesn't matter'). To his father and mother he is a dutiful son, and his children, more especially his sons, find him a most indulgent father, but in the *anderoun* he is a figure of fear, whose nod is to be obeyed, whose slightest frown is to be trembled at. On the other hand, his servants and slaves regard him with trustful affection, while he, on his side, addresses each of them as *bacha* (child) and confides all his treasured possessions to their care, knowing that it is very seldom that a Persian servant will betray the confidence of a Persian master. (The case is entirely altered when the

Persia

master happens to belong to a different race and a different religion !)

He is a fine horseman, and likes to indulge in trick-riding such as we should think more suitable for a circus ring, but he does not care for polo, though the ancient kings of his country used to play it with enthusiasm, mounted on beautiful ponies with trappings of gold. He likes better to spend his time smoking his long *nargilyeh*, the water-pipe, which is handed round from guest to guest when he has company, or sipping sherbet or a syrup made from pomegranate juice, and chatting with his friends. The poor ladies and young girls in the anderoun lead a dull and uneventful life, in which dishes of sweetmeats and water-pipes play a large part. Little girls are not taught to read or write, and when they grow up and are duly married to a husband whom they have never seen before, they have nothing to look forward to but a repetition of the same lazy existence, with, perhaps, a visit, closely veiled, to the takieh during Moharram, or, if their husband be very indulgent, a pilgrimage to some famous



PERSIAN GIRL IN NATIONAL DRESS

Moslem shrine, such as the mosques at Meshed and Kum.

At sunrise True Believers are awakened by the *muezzin*, the call to prayer, uttered from the roof or the tower of the nearest mosque by one of the mollahs.

"*Ya Allah illallaha, Mohammed erusullulah*," chants the deep voice high above the flat-roofed houses—"There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet," and then the call goes on: "Come to prayers—come to good works! There is no god but God"—and in the morning the mollah adds: "Prayers are better than sleep."

Book of Other Lands

Up jumps the Persian gentleman, replaces his close-fitting night-cap with the high kullah, and washes his face, hands and feet with rose-water before kneeling on his prayer-rug, turning toward Mecca, and, with his forehead bowed down upon a fragment of earth from the Sacred City, begins his morning prayers. The muezzin is sounded again at noon and at sunset, and everybody obeys its call, however busily or frivolously they may at the moment be employed. The chief meal of the Persian day is eaten toward noon, on a leather cloth stretched upon the floor. Instead of a plate and a napkin each guest has two or more thin slabs of soft warm bread. The national dish is the *pilau*, a mound of rice mingled with clarified butter and small pieces of mutton and chicken ; to these, vegetables, almonds, and pomegranate-juice are sometimes added. Another favourite dish is *kabobs*, little lumps of lamb, liver, and onion cooked upon skewers over a charcoal fire. Sherbet is served in large bowls, each guest drinking from the same ladle of carved pear-wood. There are no knives or forks, and in polite circles only the right hand is used at meals, so a great deal of grace and skill is required to eat with elegance. Men and women never sit down to eat together. The poor things in the *anderoun* are given what remains of the repast enjoyed in the *biroun* by the men of the family and their guests ! In theory, of course, Persians follow the commandment of the Prophet to touch no wine, but in practice they constantly disregard it, and not only drink, but make, excellent wines. Shiraz is the town from which the best of these native wines come, and it is the 'god-mother' of the Spanish town Xeres, and of the English name—'sherry'—for the golden-coloured wine now made in Spain.

After this principal meal of the day, servants come and pour rose-water over the right hands of the company, and every one settles down for the afternoon nap, in which the poor as well as the rich always indulge during the hours when the sun is most powerful. Tea, with much sugar but without any milk, is drunk frequently by both men and women, and great quantities of fruit are eaten at certain seasons of the year. The rice for the *pilau* is grown in the moist, warm lowlands by

Persia

the Persian Gulf, but peaches, melons, grapes, cherries, apricots, figs, and plums flourish in the fertile districts that border the great desert region of the Persian plateau. Tabriz is famous for its peaches, Isphahan for its melons, one of which will sometimes weigh as much as 70 lb., Kermanshah for its heavy purple figs. Thé Ancient Romans called the peach '*Persicum malum*'—'the Persian apple.' We have seen that

the typical Persian gentleman is not an energetic fellow, but his small sons—like the small boys in other lands—have plenty games which call for a certain amount of nimbleness and activity. Among these are 'hat in the ring' in which the hapless hat is used as a sort of football, wrestling, top-spinning (on the roofs of houses, sometimes with dire results if the mud-bricks are weakened by the tops and the next shower of rain penetrates the weak place), and fights with snowballs in winter.

Persians are fond of horses, though in some ways their ideas of kindness to animals may not be quite the same as ours. For instance, they use a sort of bit which would never be permitted in England, as it is designed to hurt the horse's mouth and make it plunge and rear, thus giving the rider an opportunity to show his skill.

The late Shah of Persia used to go hawking on the flat ground surrounding Teheran. The trained falcons are of various types, according to the size of the game to be pursued



PERSIAN BOYS

Book of Other Lands

—heron, crane, hare, partridge, or quail. In order to enable the smallest falcons to swoop the better upon their prey, their own tails are usually removed, and the tail-feathers of larger birds fixed in their place, which gives them a rather quaint appearance sometimes.

Though comparatively few Persians stir beyond the frontiers of their own country, many of them have a distinct taste for a wandering life, and eagerly seize any opportunity to visit the famous mosques and cities of their native land. A visitor from Europe or America would probably turn his steps toward the wide plain of Mervdasht, where stand the gaunt and battered ruins that once beheld the glittering pomp of Darius and Xerxes. These majestic fragments mark the site of Persepolis; the few columns that still stand were part of the noble cedar-roofed hall built by Darius and burned almost to ashes by Alexander the Great, and the winged bulls carved at the corners of the half-vanished walls once proclaimed the might of Xerxes and the glory of Persia. At Bisitun, twenty-four miles east of Kermanshah, there are massive cliff-sculptures, hewn in the side of the rocky ridge that towers 1500 feet above the plain. All these relics of bygone splendours fascinate such Western travellers as may make the long and perilous journey to look upon them; but to the native-born Persian they are not nearly so interesting or so important as the mosques at Meshed and Kum. Nobody has promised perpetual joys of Paradise to the pilgrim who gazes upon the pillars of Darius, the winged beasts of Xerxes, or the rock-hewn triumph of Sapor the Great over Valerian, Emperor of Rome!

The road from Teheran to Kum lies across a dreary waste of salt, and past salt lakes with waters of dazzlingly bright blue. When the traveller comes within about twenty miles of his goal, he catches a first glimpse of the golden domes of Fatima's mosque, and at the same time he notices queer little piles of pebbles beginning to appear along the edge of the road. These pebbles are flung by the Faithful to mark the spot whence they first caught sight of the mosque. Fatima was the sister of Imaum Reza, the eighth of the Holy *Imaums* (or Saints) of Islam, whose tomb is at Meshed. No 'unbeliever' is suffered

Persia

to approach her resting-place at Kum, but early in the nineteenth century a courageous Briton penetrated the portals in disguise and gazed upon the exquisite silver screen which surrounds her tomb and the beautifully-coloured tiles with which the surrounding walls are inlaid. These tiles come, as a rule, from the next town to the south of Kum—Kashan. They are called *kashi*, and from them the town of their manufacture takes its name. Kashan is also celebrated for the timorous character of its inhabitants and the number and fierceness of its scorpions! South of Kashan lies Isphahan, the once-gorgeous capital of one of the greatest of Persia's Moslem kings, Shah Abbas. "*Isphahan nisfi jehan*" say the Persians, by which they mean that this city is "half the world." But much of its glory has departed. The townsfolk are reputed to be as mean as the Kashanis are timid. There is a Persian saying to describe a miser, "He puts cheese inside a flask, and rubs his bread upon the outside," which is said to have originated in the odd habit of an old merchant of Isphahan.

South-east of that miserly city lies Yezd, and it is chiefly in this region that the people are found who still cling to the ancient religion of Persia—Zoroastrianism, or Fire Worship. When the Arabs invaded and conquered the country in the year 636 they strove to stamp out this faith and to force their new subjects to accept the new creed of Islam. (It was really 'new' then, for Mohammed, the founder, had been dead only four years.) Many obeyed. And of the few who refused, fewer still remained in their old home. A little band, the 'Pilgrim Fathers of the East,' found refuge in India, where their descendants, the Parsees, thrive and flourish and worship at fire-altars to this day. The descendants of those who stayed in Persia without changing their religion are known as *Gabrs*, and are still an object of hostility and persecution among their Moslem neighbours. Till quite recently a Gabr might not ride on horseback, or wear spectacles, or carry an umbrella, or surmount his house with the erections known as *badirs* or wind-towers, whence a current of cool air refreshes the dwellers in Moslem houses during the hot season. The Gabrs who belong to the pure Iranian race, unmixed with

Book of Other Lands

Turkish or Kurdish blood, have remarkably regular features, but they are compelled to wear ugly yellow garments and uncouth helmet-shaped felt hats.

Christianity is represented in Persia by the Nestorians, a community which established themselves there in the fifth century A.D., and by a small colony of Armenians at Julfa, near Isphahan, the descendants of Armenian craftsmen who were established there by Shah Abbas in the seventeenth century to teach his people the arts of carpet-weaving, glazing pottery, and so forth. It is rather curious that such instruction should have been thought necessary, for the Persians had proved themselves to be an artistic and inventive race as long ago as the days of Darius. But perhaps Shah Abbas thought they were growing lazy, and that the example of the industrious Armenians might do them good! The secret of making the beautiful kashi is now lost. It is said that the glaze had to be mixed with gold, or some other precious metal, to give it the peculiar iridescent shimmer which is its greatest charm.

Carpets, velvets, and brocades began to reach Europe from Persia before the time of Shah Abbas—indeed, it is probable that some of the rich stuffs sold by Sir Richard Whittington to King Henry IV for the wedding-gowns of the Plantagenet princesses were actually brought from Isphahan!

Toward the end of the fifteenth century characteristic Persian designs begin to appear in the pictures of the Dutch, Flemish, and Florentine painters. For example, the brocade at the back of the Madonna's chair and the carpet at her feet in Memling's National Gallery "Virgin and Child with St George," and the rich mantle worn by Cosimo de' Medici in Botticelli's "Adoration of the Magi," are in design, and probably in actual substance, purely Persian.

It was about the same time that fragments of the Persian language began to creep into English, as the result of the increasing intercourse between merchants of the two countries. Both the game and the name of chess came from Persia; 'awning' is probably a form of *awang*, something hung up; 'azure' is just a variant of *lajward*, lapis-lazuli colour; 'shawl' is very like its parent *shâl*; 'scarlet' has not wandered

Persia

far from *sagalat*, red cloth; a 'jar' in Persian is *jarrah*, and 'jessamine' *yasmin*, and 'sugar' *shakar*.

Already in the reign of Queen Elizabeth Persian ideas of dress had begun to make their way among even the "home-keeping youths" of England. In Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Act iii., Sc. 6), when Edgar appears before the King clad only in a blanket, Lear says: "I do not like the fashion of your garments; you will say they are Persian attire; but let them be changed."

King Charles II, in the year 1666, suddenly decided, at the instigation of Mr John Evelyn, to dress thenceforth "after the Persian mode," that is to say, to abandon his stiff lace collar, doublet and cloak, and wear "a comely vest with a girdle"; but the courtiers who wagered that his merry Majesty would soon return to French fashions won their wager.

The most beautiful carpets are made—and have been made for many centuries—at a place called Kerman. The pattern is dictated to the weavers by an overseer known as the *ustad*, who chants in a deep voice, and is answered by the lighter and shriller voices of the women and children by whom the work is done. But it was at Kashan, not at Kerman, that one of the most famous carpets in the world was made in the year 1540. This is the Ardebil carpet, specially made for the mosque in the Persian city of that name, and now one of the treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. The ground



GIRLS WEAVING PERSIAN CARPETS

Book of Other Lands

is deepest blue, and the marvellously intricate design of flowers, lamps, and jewelled arabesques is worked in wine-red, dull green, dull gold, and dark brown. The fabric is goat-hair, and in every square inch there are 380 knots ; that is to say, 33 millions in the entire carpet.

It is partly the glorious wealth of flowers in Persian art that has given rise to our Western vision of Persia as a veritable Paradise of flowers. We are half-reluctant to realize how great a part of the country is bare and lifeless desert. And the greed of some later Shahs, who cut down and sold vast groves of beautiful trees, poplar, cypress, and plane, has made the atmosphere even more dry and, therefore, the soil even less fruitful. Nevertheless there are happy regions, on the fringes of the lonely waste of salt and sand, where flowers burst forth in spring with almost the joyous luxuriance of the painted or woven flowers which we in the West know so well and find so charming. Then the convolvulus rambles in the fields, and near the rivers grow sweet briars, tamarisks, and tulips, tiny cyclamens, tall irises, and blue mazes of forget-me-nots. Then the bul-bul, the Persian nightingale, still sings his exquisite song among dense thickets of those pale-tinted, loose-petalled roses that Persian poets have loved so well—

and still a ruby kindles in the vine,
And many a garden by the water blows.

CHAPTER V

EGYPT AND PALESTINE

WHEN in the year 332 B.C. Alexander the Great completed the conquest of Egypt he resolved to build a mighty city, peopled by Greek settlers, to be a link between his own kingdom of Macedonia and the rich valley of the Nile. This city bears his name to this day ; but he did not live to see its palaces and temples rise from the sandy strip of shore where before his time there stood only a straggling township of low-roofed huts, the homes of pirates and fishermen. Two hundred years after Alexander had been laid in his golden coffin in the centre of Alexandria, the first lighthouse ever built was set up by Ptolemy the Second on what was then the Island of Pharos. Between the island and the city ran a breakwater nearly a mile long, but the action of the tides gradually silted up the channel, and Pharos became one with the mainland. Its lighthouse was numbered by the ancients among the Seven Wonders of the World. By day, the polished mirrors on its white marble summit flashed back the sun's rays on every side ; by night, the fire kept burning there aloft guided the ships of fishermen, merchants and mariners safely into port. Ptolemy's tower still stood when the glory of Alexander's city had passed away ; it was not until the thirteenth century A.D. that an earthquake laid it in the dust.

For a thousand years Alexandria was the capital of Egypt, rivalling Carthage in wealth, and bowing to no other city except Imperial Rome. It was a centre of Jewish as well as of Greek culture, and it was there that the Septuagint, the first translation of the Old Testament into classical Greek, was made, by the command of that same enlightened Ptolemy who built the lighthouse on Pharos. The library of the Serapeum, the temple of Jupiter Serapis, contained 700,000 volumes, the garnered wisdom and poetry of the ancient world,

Book of Other Lands

where scholars came from Greece and Rome, Persia, and Arabia, to study and to make copies. Unfortunately Theophilus, Christian Patriarch of Alexandria in the fifth century A.D., in his anxiety that Christianity should triumph over all pagan learning and philosophy, destroyed the greater part of this priceless treasure-house, and the work of destruction seems to have been completed when 'Amr, the Arab invader, and his Moslem hordes, took the city in the year A.D. 640 after a siege lasting fourteen months. 'Amr wrote to the Caliph Omar that Alexandria contained "4000 palaces, 12,000 dealers in fresh oil, 12,000 gardeners, and 400 theatres and places of amusement." Ever since the Arab conquest, the religion of Mohammed has been the religion of the great mass of the inhabitants of Egypt, with the exception of the Copts, a Christian sect numbering about a million. Arabic is the language they speak, and the alphabet they use is, of course, the Arabic alphabet.

The traveller who lands at Alexandria with his mind full of visions of pagan princes and Christian patriarchs, golden tombs and silver towers, will be disappointed, for there are few visible traces of antiquity about the busy modern town. He will not be tempted to linger there, but will push on to Cairo, which is the next stage on his journey to the Sphinx and the Pyramids and the Nile, the wonders he has come so far to see. Amusing though the scene may be in the quarter of Cairo frequented by Europeans, with its lively open-air cafés, its chattering groups of Italians and Frenchmen, Greeks, and Levantines, there is nothing typically Egyptian about it. If you seek what is called 'local colour' you will find it in the native quarter, among the high, narrow houses with their wooden-latticed windows, the jostling, many-hued crowds, the shadowy shops with their bright wares, copper pots, scarlet saddles, vivid rugs. Against the sapphire sky the domes and minarets of Cairo's many mosques stand out in brilliant relief, milk-white, golden, or gay with pale-tinted marbles and glittering tiles. The upper stories of the white-washed houses overhang the streets, and round their doors there are often painted patterns in orange, red and blue. If you see on a house wall a row of

Egypt and Palestine

quaint, childish pictures representing steamers, trains, and horses, you may know by that sign that he who lives within is a *Hajj*, who has been to Mecca on that pilgrimage which every good Moslem longs to make.

The Cairenes, like the other inhabitants of Lower Egypt, have light, tawny skins, while the people of Upper Egypt, Nubia, and the Sudan wear "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun," and have complexions deepening from bronze to jet. They are all well-proportioned, active, and good-looking, and their national character is marked by cheerfulness and an engaging desire to please. Among the poorer classes, costume is a very simple affair, consisting of few and scanty garments made of blue cotton or brown wool ; but such of the more prosperous Egyptians who have not adopted European dress are very picturesque and dignified to look upon. The men wear a silken robe with hanging sleeves, girt at the waist by a silk scarf or a rich shawl ; over this flows the *jibbah*, a long outer robe of close-woven cloth. On the head is the Turkish fez of red felt, shaped like a flower-pot, which is always worn, even with European dress. When worn with native dress, a turban is often wound round, completely hiding it. Slippers are usually of scarlet leather, without heels. The ladies wear very 'baggy' silk trousers, bright stockings (often pink), yellow morocco slippers, a close-fitting vest with slit skirts which can be tucked up into the sash, and over that a jacket heavily embroidered with gold. The hair hangs in numerous tight plaits, lengthened with silken cords and tinkling with coins and other ornaments. Over the head is draped a white veil embroidered at either end with gold and coloured threads, and drawn across the face, leaving only the eyes visible, in the presence of men. Out of doors the Egyptian lady wears a loose robe of coloured silk, a veil that hides her nose, chin and neck, and, over these, a tremendous shapeless garment of black silk which muffles her head and shoulders and makes her look like a walking bundle. Coffee, cigarettes, sherbet, and sweetmeats are the chief delight of most Egyptians, both men and women, and among the street-sellers few fare better than those who sell sweet things to eat and drink. One of the most

Book of Other Lands

familiar figures in the streets is the water-seller. Sometimes he carries the water in a bulging goat-skin on his back, ready to sprinkle the dusty roadway, or to fill up the big earthenware vessels set for that purpose outside the doors of the high, white houses. Sometimes he carries filtered water, or



A SWEET-WATER SELLER, CAIRO

liquorice-water, or lemonade, in an enormous jar, pouring it deftly over his own shoulder into the little brass cups from which his customers drink.

One of the most impressive buildings in Cairo is the Citadel, the fortress built by Saladin, the chivalrous Saracen warrior against whom King Richard Cœur-de-Lion fought in the Third Crusade. Saladin was what we should now call a 'sportsman'; but he had no respect for the handiwork of the Pharaohs, and when he wanted building materials he seized whatever seemed to suit his purpose

best—and that happened to be the beautifully-hewn blocks of stone that formed part of the temples and tombs of the ancient Egyptian kings.

It is at Cairo that the eager traveller will have his first glimpse of one of the most famous rivers in the world. Long ago people firmly believed that the Nile flowed straight from Paradise. We, who are so much more clever, know that the source of the White Nile is in Lake Victoria Nyanza, Uganda, while the source of the Blue Nile is in Lake Tsana, in the Abyssinian mountains, and that the two meet and become one river, *the Nile*, at Khartum, where they begin their long journey to the sea. It is hardly surprising that the people of Egypt once worshipped their great river as a god, for upon its

Egypt and Palestine

yearly rise and fall depended the fate of all their crops. It was thanks to the richness of the soil which the Nile alternately submerged and left dry that there was "corn in Egypt" when Joseph's brethren were stricken with famine. Modern engineering has made it possible to direct and control the waters of this marvellous river, but the *fellaheen*, the cultivators, still hold a feast of rejoicing when the yearly 'rise'



PLOUGHING WITH CAMELS ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE

occurs—and, indeed, they may well be grateful to the power which makes the fringes of the desert green and fruitful.

There is a point where, quite suddenly, the fields of corn and cotton and beans, the groves of date-palms, stop short, and the desert begins. But it is a mistake to imagine that the desert is only a dull, lifeless, colourless sea of sand. The sand itself is of many colours, changing with the movements of the clouds and the colours of the sky ; bright patches of salt, or streaks of pebbles, and tufts of hyssop and wiry, grey bushes break the monotony. And wherever there is a little island of green in that tawny ocean of sand you may see scenes that make the Old Testament seem a record of the doings of our own days—

Book of Other Lands

the shepherd with his flocks, or the oxen treading out the corn, or maidens going for water to the well among the palms.

Sharkiye, the eastern province of the delta, is believed to be the district described in the Bible as the Land of Goshen. Here little groups of farmsteads nestle among palm- and tamarisk-trees. To the roofs are fixed tiny windmills, or figures of men with revolving arms, as charms against any wicked spirits that may be about. A swallow's nest is also considered an excellent protection ; when once a swallow



A PRIMITIVE THRESHING-MACHINE

It consists of a sledge resting on sharp iron discs. When drawn over the wheat it crushes the stalks and ears and sets free the grain. It is identical with the machine used in Egypt 4000 years ago.

began to build in a silver coffee-pot belonging to the *Omdeh*, or headman, of a village in the delta, nobody thought of disturbing her, and the *Omdeh* cheerfully took his coffee from a more humble earthenware vessel for her sake.

It is from Cairo that most travellers set out on their journey to the most famous of all the monuments of Ancient Egypt, the three Pyramids of Gizeh and the great Sphinx. King Khufu built the largest Pyramid forty centuries before the birth of Christ, and it remains one of the most amazing triumphs of human thought and human toil. Even now, when 30 feet of the summit have vanished, it is 150 feet higher than St Paul's Cathedral : the base covers nearly 13 acres of land, and each of its four sides is 750 feet long. The separate blocks of very hard stone are so skilfully fitted together, with-



A STREET SCENE IN CAIRO

Photo Donald McLeish



A GIRLS' SCHOOL AT CAIRO

The children are taught to repeat verses from the Koran and very little more

Photo Donald McLeish

Egypt and Palestine

out any cement, that a sheet of paper could not be thrust between them. It is thought that to obtain this mathematical perfection of line bronze saws set with diamonds must have been used by King Khufu's workmen. Deep in the heart of the Pyramids are the rock-hewn tombs of the royal builders, who had hoped and planned to lie there undisturbed for ever, but whose resting-place has long since been invaded by Arab robbers and European scientists, both equally eager for spoil. Under the shadow of the second Pyramid crouches the great Sphinx, its battered human head rising seventy feet into the air, its lion-limbs stretching for two hundred feet along the sand. Until the troops of the Turkish viceroy of Egypt made its face a target for their cannon early in the nineteenth century, the Sphinx had borne the assaults of the centuries almost unmoved; and even now there is a haunting expression upon its scarred and broken features that sometimes strikes even the most jaunty pilgrim with something like awe. The tablet between its huge paws tells how a king of Egypt once fell asleep there and dreamt that the Sphinx had asked him to free its limbs of the drifting sand, and how, when he woke up, the king made sure that the request should be fulfilled. No one who feels the enchantment of the long-vanished past would willingly leave Egypt without visiting Karnak and Luxor and Thebes, where roofless temples and fallen fragments of gigantic images still bear witness to the pomp, the pride and the power of the Pharaohs. In the gaunt limestone cliffs behind Thebes is the famous Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, where the flanks of the hills are honeycombed with deeply-hollowed and gorgeously-painted sepulchral chambers. Many of the mummies that once reposed there, and much of the treasure that was sealed up with them in death, have now been removed to museums in various parts of the world, but from time to time fresh wonders reward the patience of the Egyptologists, the most recent of these 'finds' being the tomb of King Tutankhamen.

Near Thebes, too, are the two gigantic statues of Amen-hotep III, called by the Greeks the Colossi of Memnon. The mythical hero whose name thus became connected with

Book of Other Lands

the statues was a son of Eos, the spirit of the dawn, and Tithonus, a prince of Troy. It was believed that when the first rays of the rising sun touched one of these two mighty images it gave forth a sound "like the twang of a harp-string," and that this was Memnon's greeting to his beautiful mother.



ONE OF THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON

From all parts of the antique world people of all classes, rich and poor, used to throng to Thebes during the Græco-Roman period, in the hope of hearing this mysterious sound. Some of them certainly either heard it, or *thought* that they did, for many of them took the trouble to make a record in carven stone of the result of their pilgrimage. To this day nobody can tell just *how* the mystic 'twang' was produced, whether by the action of the sun's rays on the stone or by a priest concealed in the hollow core of the image. In A.D. 170 the Emperor Septimius Severus had the Colossus repaired, and portions of it which had been

cast down by an earthquake some two centuries earlier were restored to their former place. And from that moment Memnon was mute!

Egypt seems to have been destined to be the scene of mighty enterprises of engineering from the dawn of history to the present day. One of the greatest of these enterprises was the cutting of the Suez Canal, by which the Mediterranean and the Red Sea were united, and the route from Europe to India and the Far East made much shorter and more direct. The engineer who accomplished this memorable feat was a Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps, but the great dam on the Nile at Assuan, and, more recently, the even greater dam at Sennar, on the Blue Nile, were both the fruit of British resourcefulness

Egypt and Palestine

and British perseverance. To reach the Blue Nile a long journey southward across the desert is needed, but most boys would think it well worth while if they knew that at the end of the journey they would see a mighty triumph of engineering in this giant dam 9925 feet long and 130 feet high, which will turn three million acres of sand into fruitful fields producing large crops of cotton, corn, and beans.

Journeying northward along the Blue Nile from Sennar, the traveller will reach the modern but by no means unromantic city of Khartum. He is not actually in Egypt now, but in the Sudan, called by the Arabs 'Bilad-es-Sudan'—the country of the dark people. Mohammed Ali, the same Turkish viceroy whose guns had battered the face of the Sphinx, sent two of his sons to conquer this little-known territory, and it was they who founded Khartum, on a thin strip of land where the Blue Nile and the White Nile meet. 'Khartum' was the native name for the spot, and means 'Elephant's Trunk.' The modern town, whose squares and avenues are planned so as to trace the lines of the Union Jack, was largely the creation of Lord Kitchener, after his victory at Omdurman in 1898. The governor's palace marks the site of an older building, and in front of the southern façade is a beautiful bronze statue of a British officer, wearing Egyptian uniform and seated on a camel. Inside the palace a tablet marks the spot where that officer met his death, alone against a horde of yelling Dervishes, in the year 1885. His name was Gordon.

Forty years have passed since General Gordon's adventurous and romantic career closed, but his spirit and his memory are still alive in the Sudan. A great college bearing his name is the chief educational centre in the country. And so strongly is the force of his personality still felt, the directors of the tremendous engineering scheme at Sennar decided that a picture of his statue, the one on the camel, should be stamped upon every document and piece of stationery used in connexion with the work.

Northward across the desert from Khartum lies the road to Palestine, the Holy Land of crusaders and pilgrims, and to Jerusalem, the City set upon a Hill, where Christians,

Book of Other Lands

Mohammedans and Jews alike find places for pilgrimage and prayer. Glimpses of dark-coloured tents, or of scudding camels dangling with scarlet tassels and ridden by bearded Bedouins with billowing white cloaks, remind the northward-bound traveller that he is on the edge of the "Garden of Allah," the desert, where Arab tribesmen dwell in tents, and have "no abiding city," like the Children of Israel in the days of old. At the noonday hour of prayer you will see the rider check his camel, and the horseman rein up his fleet and beautiful steed. The pious Moslem, though far from the sight of the minaret and the sound of the muezzin, will not forget his devotions. First he must free himself of all his weapons, and lay his inlaid dagger, his long musket (perhaps an aged flint-lock, with its stock set with ivory), and his red-tasselled spear upon the sand, with their points toward Mecca. Then he will bow his forehead upon the dust, and declare yet again that there is no God save Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet.

The desert is not devoid of all plant-life. Here and there you will see clumps of a wiry grey shrub something like sage, called *mit-minan*, or vivid green hyssop, or a heliotrope flower, the *helga*, with a bell-shaped blossom. Among their roots tiny scarab-beetles and darting lizards scurry to and fro; high in the blue air soars the hawk, once the sacred symbol of the long-departed Pharaohs. Among the patches of coloured pebbles—ruddy, purple, grey, and black—hops the jerboa, quaintest of little rodents, with his long, slender hind-legs and his very short fore-paws, and his huge, frightened eyes.

The Bedouins are famous for at least one virtue, and that a very delightful one—the virtue of hospitality. It is well known that if once you have 'eaten salt' with a Bedouin he will never harm you. For that reason timid travellers always feel relieved when salt is produced and taken by everyone present, as it usually is during the first meal that a stranger is offered in the tent. "This house," the courteous Sheikh will say to his guest, "this house is yours. Do with it, and with us, whatsoever you please." The 'house,' of course, is not a house at all, but a tent. There the chief tribesmen will gather to bid the Sheikh's guest "*Mahubbah!*" (Welcome!), not

Egypt and Palestine

forgetting to kick off their shoes at the entrance, and there they will sup upon slabs of soft warm bread and cheese made from camel's milk.

The tent-cloth is usually woven of goat-hair, woven in broad stripes, black, green, chocolate-red, and white ; the fire round which the family crowd together after dusk is kindled in an earthenware pot half-buried in the sand. Pet greyhounds and tame gazelles often share the shelter of the Sheikh's tent, and clucking multitudes of fowls wander outside.

The small boys of the family are early taught to ride and shoot, while the little girls soon learn to help their mother to grind corn in a rough sort of pestle-and-mortar, and to weave the cloth of which their movable home is made.

As the pilgrim turns northward and eastward to the Mediterranean on his way to Palestine he will leave on his right the peninsula of Sinai and the great "Mountain of the Voice of God." The rocks of which this famous mountain is composed are of various kinds and colours—granite, porphyry, diorite, and gneiss, and deep into its side the captives of the Pharaohs tunnelled in quest of turquoise, for it was from Sinai that the most beautiful blue stones came that adorned the brows and fingers of the kings and queens of Egypt. Soon we shall find ourselves in the Holy Land, one of the most famous lands in the world, though it is only a slender strip 140 miles long and, west of Jordan, never more than 80 miles broad. North and south across this territory there runs a deep crack in the earth's crust, and the Jordan flows along the line traced by this crack. For two-thirds of its course the river is below the sea-level. Its name means "the down-comer," and is well deserved, for it flows downhill all the way. Nobody could call it beautiful, this fierce, swift, tawny river, the only one in Palestine. When its waters leave the Lake of Galilee they are clear, but in their course they wash the soft brown marl from their banks and their colour changes to a tawny hue until it is lost in the intense blue of the Dead Sea. No boats have ever sailed upon them, no great cities have ever been built beside them, and yet no waters have ever been more famous in the religious history of the world. In Biblical times the river formed a

Book of Other Lands

sort of dividing-line between the settled communities living in walled towns and the wandering tribes who had "no abiding city." For this reason the crossing of Jordan, in either direction, always marked an important crisis in the history of the Jews.

Geographically Palestine is a very remarkable country, with its ranges of terraced mountains, its one strange, ever-descending river, its two great lakes, and its sharp contrasts of bare, stern crags and luxuriant vegetation. Historically it is remarkable too, for it has never belonged to one single nation, and has passed successively under the rule of Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Franks, and Turks, all of whom, though the last least of all, have left enduring traces on the artistic and spiritual development of the land.

There could be no more exciting field for the excavator, who when he begins to dig can never tell whether he is going to bring to light a fragment of wall built by one of the kings of Israel, or the carved face of a Pharaoh, or a clay tablet bearing the name of Nebuchadnezzar, or a coin with "the image and superscription" of Cæsar, a Saracen spear or a Crusader's sword.

"A city set upon a hill cannot be hid." Jerusalem is not only set upon a double hill, but surrounded by hills. And assuredly it cannot "be hid," for the name and the idea of that City of Peace have been holy to unnumbered millions of people all over the world for nearly two thousand years. On the east of the double hill lies the valley of Kedron, and on the farther side of the valley rises the Mount of Olives. Of old Jerusalem was divided into two sections, the western, called Zion, being the stronghold of the Jebusites, the original inhabitants, while the eastern was the site of the walled city built by King David and the mighty Temple, threescore cubits long, built by King Solomon with the cedar-wood sent to him by Hiram, king of Tyre. Jerusalem as we see it to-day is really a Saracenic city, but the Saracens who built it were so strongly influenced by their Frankish foes that much of their architecture has a quaintly Western and Christian look. It is a city of battle-

Egypt and Palestine

mented gates and girdling walls, of steep, narrow streets, and of alleys so steep and narrow that they look like staircases climbing between the houses, and have to be barred off with iron bars lest some camel should try to go up and then find itself unable to come down again. Upon the place where Solomon's cedar-beams once stood there now stands a magnificent Moslem building known as the Mosque of Omar, though Omar, the brave and knightly Arab conqueror of Jerusalem, was dead when it was built in the year A.D. 688. Its great dome is glittering with tile-work, vivid blue and bright green, like the scales of some gorgeous dragon. Deep below the foundations lies the rock which, according to an ancient Jewish tradition, was the very place where Abraham took Isaac to be sacrificed, and where the ram was found in the thicket in the nick of time!

The gates of Jerusalem have beautiful names—the Jaffa Gate, the Damascus Gate, the Golden Gate, the Gate of St Stephen. Near the Jaffa Gate is the Tower of David, but unfortunately it was not built by David, or anywhere near his times. Its foundations are part of the palace of Herod the Tetrarch, who was a mighty beautifier of the city over which he ruled; he enriched it with a theatre, a gymnasium, and many pillars and towers, of which hardly any trace remains to-day. Standing near the Mosque of Omar and gazing toward the setting sun the pilgrim has a far-off glimpse of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built long ago, destroyed, and built again, and strangely modern-looking now, though the porch set up by the Crusaders stands still and is not greatly changed since Frankish warriors passed beneath it in coats of clinking mail. In 1230 Pope Gregory IX decreed that the



THE MOSQUE OF OMAR

Book of Other Lands

brothers of the Order of St Francis should be the custodians of the holy places of Jerusalem which had been marked out and made glorious by the Emperor Constantine and his mother, the pious Helena, and they still have charge of the Garden of Gethsemane ; but the care of various edifices has now to be divided between members of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholics, who have each a certain part of the buildings set apart for them and their pilgrims, but who, most



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

unfortunately, do not always remain within the limits laid down for them, with the sad result that the Moslems have sometimes had to intervene to separate the squabbling Christians.

Jerusalem is a city of many monasteries—Greek, Roman, Armenian, Syrian, Abyssinian, Russian—and the quaint variations of monastic dress, the various forms of head-gear and the colours of the robes, add much to the picturesqueness of the streets. Members of the Greek Church wear flowing beards and high, peaked black headdresses from which hang stiff black hoods or veils. Some of the Latin monks also are bearded, but they shave the crowns of their heads and do not, as the Greek monks do, wear their hair knotted into a ‘bun’ on the nape of the neck. The Arab women, of course, walk

Egypt and Palestine

darkly muffled, like their sisters in Cairo and Teheran ; but the Christian women of Palestine walk fearlessly unveiled. The Christians of Bethlehem wear white dresses, and high, peaked headdresses decorated with dangling blobs of coral and glinting gold or silver coins. Small boys have bright blue beads sewn to the front of their close-fitting caps to keep away bad luck. Here and there among the jostling, many-coloured crowds that form a never-ending pageant in the steep streets of Jerusalem you will see bearded Jews with queer curls, like ram's horns, on either side of their faces, or Jewish Rabbis in high fur caps. But now you will not see the red fez, the heavy musket, and the loose, shabby uniform of the Turkish soldiers who once garrisoned the Holy City.

Everyone who has ever looked with attention at any old paintings, Dutch or Italian or Spanish, of the Virgin and Child, must have noticed how often the artist planted a little town somewhere in the distant landscape at the back of the picture. It is always a town of high walls and many towers, set on the top of a steep hill, from which the land falls sharply away on all sides. It has almost the look of a toy town, cut out of grey and white cardboard, or modelled in coloured sugar ; yet you know at once that it is meant to be a real place, and an important place, too. Occasionally there are winged figures in the sky above it ; always it is bathed in quiet light, very clear and cool. That pictured town is meant to be Jerusalem. And, strangely enough, the *real* Jerusalem, which none of those artists can ever have seen, is almost like one of those pictures come to life.



VENERABLE MONK OF THE
MONASTERY OF MAR-SABA
SET IN THE MIDST OF A
ROCKY WILDERNESS NEAR
THE DEAD SEA

Book of Other Lands

On a limestone ridge some five miles south of Jerusalem is a tiny town whose name—Bethlehem—means the ‘Place of Bread.’ The earth is fruitful there. The fields bring forth wheat, silvery-green olives flourish, and the golden blossoms of the vines are haunted by bees. In a grotto on the eastern flank of the hill coloured lamps burn perpetually over the spot



A BOY OF PALESTINE

where, according to tradition, the Christ Child was laid in the manger, between the ox and the ass. In the year 330 the Emperor Constantine caused a church to be built there, and this church was added to by the Emperor Justinian two centuries later. The entrance is through a door so narrow that it is hardly more than a slit, and inside it is so dark that at first you can see little save the flickering of the lights that hang on chains from the shadowy roof. Yet there is an even darker sanctuary below, hollowed out in the limestone rock—the place which is said to have been a shelter for two weary travellers for whom there was no room in the inn at Bethlehem, one winter night nearly two thousand years ago.

On either side of the rocky steps leading down to this cavern stand two proud pillars of purple stone with carved acanthus leaves crowning them. These were set up by the Emperor Constantine, the first Roman emperor who accepted the faith of Christ. There was an ancient Arab saying that when the waters of the Nile flowed through Jerusalem the Christians would return in triumph; and this saying was very curiously fulfilled, for one of the first things which the British did, after the capture of Jerusalem by Lord Allenby in 1917, was to set their engineers to work to bring pure water by a pipe-line to the city, where under Turkish rule only oozy cisterns gave a meagre and tainted supply to the citizens. And the most natural source for that water was the River of Egypt! In

Egypt and Palestine

Roman times there had been mighty aqueducts built, for the Romans could never do without their baths; but by degrees these examples of ancient engineering had fallen into decay, and the Turk, who allowed the canals of Mesopotamia to silt up, and so changed the corn-lands into a thirsty desert, was the last person in the world to bestir himself and put the crumbling aqueducts into repair again.

Let us return and have another glimpse of Bethlehem before we turn south to the Lake of Galilee or north to the Sea of the Plain, the Dead Sea that lies 1292 feet below the Mediterranean level, between the gaunt hills of Moab and the Wilderness of Judah. Bethlehem, we know, was the home of David's father, Jesse, and the burial-place of Asahel, who was "as light of foot as a young roe" and whom Abner slew in Gibeon. In the year A.D. 386 one of the most learned and enthusiastic of the Fathers of the Christian Church, St Jerome, came to live and work in Bethlehem. Two Roman ladies of high degree whom he had converted to Christianity, the Lady Paula and her daughter, followed him, and founded four convents there, in one of which the saint made his home. A cave is still shown where Jerome is said to have retired to pray and to meditate and to complete his vast literary labours, which included a revised version of the Bible. Perhaps he also kept his pet lion in this cave, for it seems probable that the monks would have been somewhat alarmed by the presence of such an unusual pet in the monastery.

The way from Jerusalem to Galilee lies through Samaria, the land of the Good Samaritan, and skirts the eastern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, where stood places famous in Bible story—Endor, Nazareth, Cana of Galilee. In the spring-time the valleys that lie among the ridged and terraced mountains are covered with a thick embroidery of wildflowers. One of the most common and most beautiful of these is the purple anemone, of which our Lord was probably thinking when He said, "Consider the lilies of the field." Mignonette, white clover, larkspurs, and tulips abound, and by the Lake of Galilee grow tall, spiky thistles and masses of oleanders with their lance-shaped, leathery leaves and their delicate blossoms,

Book of Other Lands

milky-white or cherry-red. The villages one passes on the way are all of the same type, consisting of groups of flat-roofed houses built of large blocks of stone. The windows are barred with iron, and the chief furniture of the rooms is exceedingly simple—jars for water and oil, clay chests for meal, figs and raisins, mats and quilts which serve both for carpets and beds. Some villages are occupied entirely by native Christians, such as the Druses, others by Moslems, others again by people of both religions. Till the end of the Great War Jews were not numerous in Palestine, except in scattered colonies here and there, but now there is a plan on foot to restore many of the wandering Children of Israel to the ancient home of their race.

The Lake of Galilee, called in the New Testament the Sea of Galilee, or of Gennesareth, is a sheet of water thirteen miles long, eight miles broad, and covering an area of some sixty-four square miles. Into it and through it flows the Jordan, which rises among the mountains of the Anti-Libanus farther to the north. On three sides, north, west, and east, the lake is girdled by stern and frowning hills of black basalt, but on the south it opens out into the valley of the Jordan, on one side of which towers Mount Tabor while along the other rise the wild, craggy peaks of Gilead. The shores of the lake are of fine, soft gravel, and the edges of its basin are of deep and smooth grey mud; the waters are usually calm and glassy, but a sudden storm is apt to spring up, churning the ripples into fierce, foam-flecked waves. Fish abound, as in the days when Peter and Andrew cast their nets there. At the top of the lake, deep-buried in gigantic thistles, are the ruins of Capernaum. Quite recently some excavators digging at this spot unearthed some white limestone fragments carved with a representation of the scroll of the law and the seven-branched candlestick, and it seems not impossible that these may be portions of the actual synagogue at Capernaum, and that these fallen and battered walls witnessed the beginning of Christ's teaching before He turned westward to Tyre and Sidon. Those two cities on the sea-coast were centres of trade and commerce in the palmy days of Egypt and Greece. In Tyre was made the



AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF DENDERA

Photo Donald McLeish



THE 'STREET WHICH IS CALLED STRAIGHT' AT DAMASCUS

Photo Donald McLeish

Egypt and Palestine

rich purple dye which gave the name 'Tyrian' to the imperial robes of the Roman and Byzantine emperors; from Sidon the ships of the Phœnicians went forth on perilous trading voyages which carried them as far as the Baltic, in quest of amber, and the Scilly Isles, in quest of tin.

When we turn our faces again to the south, leaving behind us the land of Lebanon, where the goodly cedar-trees still grow, and the famous city of Damascus, which the French bombarded in 1925 and where St Paul sojourned in "the Street called Strait," and whence came, in the Middle Ages, damask napkins, damask roses, and damascened steel weapons, we may follow the swift, yellow Jordan down its deep, craggy valley until it loses itself in the Dead Sea. Or, striking westward across the Plain of Esdraelon, we may make our way to the port of Joppa, the landing-place of crusaders, pilgrims and travellers, and the reputed scene of the rescue of Andromeda by Perseus.

There used to be a legend that no bird would—or *could*—fly across the intense blue waters of the Dead Sea. The place is certainly avoided by birds, but this is probably for the very unpoetical reason that they find no fish in its inhospitable depths, and no shrubs or trees round its bitter fringes. Owing to the chemical constituents of the water, it is oily to the touch, and so buoyant that you can float joyously on the surface without the slightest effort on your part. The craggy mountains that surround the sheet of sapphire brine are weird and fantastic, with pale peaks and terraces, almost bare of any touch of vegetation. As a famous modern writer has said of this place, "These are the foundations of a fallen world. Seas move like clouds and fishes float like birds above the level of the sunken land." And this desolate valley is, indeed, the deepest hollow in the whole surface of the earth.

If the pilgrim, having enjoyed his dip in the Dead Sea, should wend toward Joppa, a tremendous contrast will await him. For the Joppa of ancient times, the centre of the cedar-wood trade of Libanus, the place where St Peter restored the kindly Dorcas to life, is the same as the Jaffa of to-day, and the chief merchandise of Jaffa is oranges. On two sides the white-

Book of Other Lands

walled seaport is girdled with orange-groves, beautiful both when the branches are thick with silver blossom and when they are heavy with golden fruit. It was in this harbour, now too shallow for any but light native craft, that the galleys of the Crusaders cast anchor, and the square-sailed, high-prowed pilgrim-ships of the Middle Ages used to disembark their living freight. Cœur de Lion came thither in the year 1187, and wrested the town from Saladin, and rode through the streets on a scarlet saddle embroidered with leopards of gold. The Saracens marvelled at his strength, his valour, and his good looks, though it *is* related that the first time Saladin's small son beheld a Frankish warrior with a shaven chin he wept with dismay !

In the days of Nero visitors to Joppa were shown two very remarkable curiosities which, unfortunately, have long since disappeared. These were the fetters with which Andromeda was chained to the rock, and the bones of the monster from which Perseus delivered her !

CHAPTER VI

GREECE AND TURKEY

LIKE Jerusalem, Athens is a city built upon a hill. It is curious, and rather interesting, to realize that the two nations of the ancient world—the Greeks and the Hebrews—whose thoughts and ideas have most strongly influenced the modern world were both dwellers in craggy and mountainous homelands.

The Greeks themselves had a quaint legend that the founder of the first little township that stood where Athens now stands was an Egyptian whose name was Cecrops, and who was half-man, half-serpent. Now, the serpent is the Egyptian symbol of wisdom, and it may have been because Cecrops and his little colony from the East brought with them a higher culture than the natives of Attica had known before that the fable grew up according to which he was not quite human. Upon a rock, now called the Acropolis (the 'highest city') the Cecropians, some time after the death of their leader, began to build temples and palaces to replace the humbler and simpler dwellings of the first settlers. Of course they were anxious to place their city under the protection of some powerful god or goddess, and, the story relates, two divine beings were equally anxious to be the chief patrons of the spot, which was not then called "Athens." These two were Poseidon, the sea-god, and Athene, the goddess of wisdom. After a great deal of wrangling, it was agreed that whichever of the two should offer the best gift to mankind should be chosen by the Cecropians. Poseidon, from his green stables below the waves, produced a silver-maned, plunging steed¹—a welcome gift to any people that loved war; but from the earth Athene called the olive-tree, and the Cecropians, who

¹ For fuller details of the stories from Greek mythology referred to in this chapter, see Mrs Cruse, *The Book of Myths*, and H. A. Guerber, *Myths of Greece and Rome* (Harrap).

Book of Other Lands

inclined rather toward the arts of peace, chose for their protector the "grey-eyed goddess," and gave her name to the new city.

The chief glory of that city was—and still is—the mighty temple raised in honour of Athene by Pericles in the year 438 B.C., upon the site of an even more ancient edifice. Even now, in its desolation and decay, when it has been battered by Venetian guns, and used as a quarry by the Turks, and when much of its marvellous sculpture has been borne away to other



THE PARTHENON, FROM THE WEST

lands, the Parthenon (the temple of Athene Parthenos, the Maiden-goddess) is one of the most impressive and inspiring sights in the whole world. What it must have been in the height of its splendour, glowing with colour and thronged with worshippers, we can hardly imagine. Whereas the aim of Western architecture, with its lofty vaulting and soaring arches, is to carry the eyes *upward*, the aim of Greek architecture was to carry them *along*. The roof of the Parthenon was flat, and the rounded and pointed arches of the Romans, the Normans, and the Saracens were yet unknown. But the narrowing line of mighty columns concentrated the vision of the worshippers upon the great statue of Athene which stood at the western end. This statue was one of the marvels of ancient art. Twenty-six cubits high, it was wrought by Phidias, the famous

Greece and Turkey

sculptor, not out of stone or marble, but out of ivory and gold. All trace of this masterpiece has now vanished, but we know from smaller copies which have survived that Athene was represented wearing a curious helmet crested with two horses' heads and a crouching sphinx ; one of her hands rested upon a wheel-shaped shield, in the other she held a statuette of the Winged Victory.

From the summit of a rocky crag called Lycabettus one can see Athens unrolled like a map at one's feet. The Acropolis, with its clustering temples through which the bright sky peers, its fallen pillars, its steeply escarped cliffs with their caves once held to be the haunts of nymphs, stands out clearly in the wonderful Athenian sunshine. To the north-east, beyond a belt of dark green olives, lies the Plain of Marathon, where the dauntless Miltiades overthrew the serried hosts of Persia ; far away, to the south-west, beyond another and a broader belt of olive-groves, is the Strait of Salamis, the scene of one of the most decisive naval victories in history, when Themistocles and his Peloponnesian fleet overcame the sea-forces of Xerxes of Persia. Then, as Byron sings :

A king sat on the rocky brow
That looks o'er sea-born Salamis :
And ships by thousands lay below,
And men in nations : all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they ?

Looking back toward the jagged crystalline crags of the Acropolis you see against the south-eastern flank a scooped-out semicircle lined with ridges or furrows of stone-work. Here is all that remains of the great open-air Theatre of Dionysus, where, in the radiant Athenian spring-time, all the citizens used to assemble to listen from dawn to sunset to the imperishable dramas of the Greek poets, of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, played by actors queerly shod with high-heeled sandals and with faces hidden behind masks much larger than life.¹ A little to the north of the Acropolis is a small hill

¹ For a description of the performances in the Theatre of Dionysus, see D. M. Stuart, *The Boy through the Ages* (Harrap).

Book of Other Lands

surmounted by time-worn traces of stone steps and benches. This was the Areopagus, the hill of Mars, where public trials were held, and where St Paul stood to proclaim to the Athenians that the ' Unknown God ' whom they worshipped was the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and " dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Perhaps there is no country in the world where the past and the present jostle each other so closely as in the Athens of to-day. Most of the more important modern buildings, such as

the University and the National Museum, are built on the classical Greek plan, with rows of columns supporting triangular pediments; but some of the more humble houses have a rather oriental look, with their flat roofs and blank walls, and the sight of them reminds us that until the Greek War of Independence, the war in which Byron laid down his life, the heel



TYPICAL BOOTBLACKS

of the Turk was heavy upon the ancient city of Plato and Pericles, " violet-crowned Athens," as her poets loved to call her.

Trees are so few in the modern town that the grove of orange-trees in the principal square is a rest to the eyes. As the fruit is bitter, none of the many Athenians who sit and chat there on summer evenings is tempted to stretch out his hand and rob one of the dark green boughs above his head. As there is no river actually flowing through Athens, and as the climate is very dry, the streets are almost as dusty as the great desert of Arabia, and when the wind rises, the air is thick with flying clouds. At every corner kneels a little bootblack, ready to remove the white powder from the boots of the passers-by. If

Greece and Turkey

he has not got a customer at the moment, he will keep up a lively knocking with his brush against his box; but as a rule he is seldom unemployed. It has been said that if an Athenian had only a penny in the world, he would spend half of it on having his boots polished and the other half on a newspaper with which to amuse himself while this was being done.

Instead of carts with polished cans full of cow's milk such as you see in most European cities, Athens has flocks of brisk, bright-eyed goats, ready to be milked whenever the goatherd finds a customer.

In winter, patient grey donkeys plod along laden with ruddy-golden oranges; in the vintage season they are laden with dark purple grapes. Though many—

far *too* many—of the people have taken to wearing western European dress, you will still see gorgeous and outlandish costumes here and there in the crowd. The quaintest are worn by the soldiers, the Albanian villagers of Salamis, and the islanders of Corfu and some of the smaller isles of the

Archipelago. A man will often be seen wearing the fustanella, a short, pleated kilt of white linen, scarlet leather slippers decorated with big pompoms, a round red cap with a long, dangling tassel, a gold-braided jacket with the sleeves slashed to show the very full white sleeves of the shirt underneath, and over that a sleeveless cloak of figured stuff edged with shining braid. The dress of the islanders is usually rather less magnificent, and consists of very baggy trousers, a sleeveless jacket over a loose shirt, and a



A PEASANT BOY BRINGING GREENSTUFF
TO MARKET

Book of Other Lands

scarlet fez with a blue tassel. The fustanella is worn chiefly on the mainland, in the province of Attica, and the baggy trousers on the islands. The Albanian women of Salamis wear skirts with numerous tucks and filmy gauze veils, but the women of Eubœa are marvellous to behold when they don their bravest attire, their necklaces and girdles of glinting Turkish coins, their white petticoats edged with brilliant embroidery, and their vivid yellow scarves knotted round their heads.

Among the more educated Greeks it is the custom to call their children after celebrated characters in the ancient history and poetry of their land. Thus the traveller will be pleasantly thrilled when a Greek father remarks, "This is my son, Themistocles—my younger son, Euripides, and my daughter, Elektra, are at school." The poorer folk, however, have much less high-sounding Christian names, and many go through life quite happily with no surnames at all. The favourite among these more usual names is Joannes (John), or 'Yanni' for short. A Greek proverb says, "Chip out a block of wood, and you will find that you have made a Yanni"; while another, even less complimentary, declares that forty-five Yannis have about the same amount of intelligence as one barnyard cock!

A Greek christening is a very elaborate ceremony, lasting nearly an hour, and it must be decidedly trying for the poor baby, upon whose face the priest blows three times to chase away the evil spirits, and whose godparents rub it all over with oil before it is seized and plunged thrice into the font. A wedding is hardly less alarming to the people chiefly concerned, for during the recitation of psalms and prayers by a bearded priest in a stiff golden robe and a high, black head-dress, the bride and bridegroom have to stand wearing gilt crowns attached to each other by white ribbons. If, as sometimes happens, the crowns are not a very good fit, and either perch on the top of the bridegroom's head or droop over one of the bride's eyes, the effect is the reverse of impressive, and neither the priest nor the wedding-guests can wholly suppress their smiles.

The Greeks belong to what is called the Eastern Orthodox

Greece and Turkey

Church, a Church in which the services are very long and the ceremonies very elaborate. No chairs or pews are allowed to the worshippers, who have to stand nearly all the time while the bearded priests chant, and the acolytes swing the clinking censers from which blue, curling fumes of incense ascend. Most of the church buildings belong to what is known as the Byzantine style of architecture, which presents certain striking resemblances to the Moslem style, and is characterized by the use of much gold and colour, and the frequent introduction of the pointed dome. As we shall see later, the two great masterpieces of this Byzantine School are Santa Sophia at Constantinople and St Mark's, Venice.

Christmas is a much less important festival than Easter for members of the Greek Church, but some of the Christmas customs remind us of those observed in the West. Small boys sing in the streets on Christmas Eve, and in the country districts of the Peloponnesus the peasants then kindle a big log which is kept smouldering on the hearth till Twelfth Night. In Athens, instead of plum-pudding, rolls stuck with walnuts and almonds are eaten. On the last day of the old year the streets of the capital are full of merry-makers, tooting on whistles, shaking rattles, and flinging handfuls of scarlet and heliotrope confetti at each other. Everyone expects a present or 'a tip' on New Year's Day, and everybody is anxious not to be forgotten. The newsboys put little notes inside the newspapers, reminding their customers how they have to be astir betimes in all weathers, the lamp-lighter leaves a card with a picture of his ladder and taper at each house on his 'beat,' and the barber puts a tray in his shop where no customer can help seeing it and in which few fail to drop a coin. On the island of Corfu Ascension Day is a favourite holiday. People sit under the olive-trees, drinking gingerbeer and eating lamb roasted on spits over wood-fires in the open air. The sea is dotted with the sails of pleasure-boats, and brass bands play patriotic tunes till far into the night.

With the one exception of Palestine, there is no country in the world so bewilderingly rich in poetical and romantic associations as Greece. The very names of the craggy islets scattered

Book of Other Lands

in the Ægean and Ionian seas call up a throng of beautiful and familiar ideas. Here is Ithaca, the tiny kingdom of the far-wandering Odysseus, a speck of jagged limestone rock. The oak-forests where the royal pigs once fed and grew fat have vanished from the gaunt slopes of Mount Anogi, but near the coast there are patches of almond and cypress trees, myrtles



PEASANT WOMAN WINDING WOOL

and oleanders, and wherever there is a thin layer of soil on the harsh stone wild-flowers abound. Here is Paros, whence came the pure and shining marble from which the Greek sculptors carved the forms of gods and of men as beautiful as gods. Here is Samos, an island of fresh springs and ancient ruined walls, the place where that Samian wine was made of which Byron sang, and the birthplace of the philosopher Pythagoras

who made deep researches in astronomy and in the science of numbers. Here is Naxos, the largest of the Cyclades, with its fragrant groves of pomegranates, oranges, figs, lemons, and cedars, where the god Dionysus found and had pity on the forlorn princess, Ariadne. The island of Delos is thickly studded with the fragments of ancient temples. Here, in a cave where they were afterward worshipped, Apollo, the god of music and poetry, and his twin-sister Artemis (Diana) the goddess of the chase, were believed to have been born. Perhaps the most fascinating of all these haunted islands is Crete, where the hero Theseus was said to have slain the fearful minotaur, and where within recent years English archæo-

Greece and Turkey

logists have unearthed the remains of an amazing civilization as far off as that of Egypt. People had come to think that King Minos was as unreal a person as Apollo himself, but now you can climb the steps of his palace at Knossos, and stand among the brightly painted walls that once beheld him in the height of his splendour. These long-ago Cretans worshipped a Snake-goddess, of whom quaint images are found, tight-waisted images of a lady whose flounced skirts suggest the English fashions of some forty years since. Right across their craggy island these people built a mighty road, carrying it across rivers and ravines, and bordering it with walls of hewn stones. Along this road came messengers from the Egyptian Pharaohs and merchants bearing gorgeous merchandise from Asia and Africa.

The two most famous mountains in Greece are Mount Olympus and Mount Parnassus; one in Thessaly, to the north-east, towering above the Gulf of Salonica, and the other in Phocis, a little south-east from Thermopylæ. Thessaly is indeed an enchanted land, for here, too, are the Vale of Tempe, Mount Pelion, where grew the tree from which was cut the huge spear of Achilles, and Mount Ossa, where the fabulous centaurs dwelt, who were the 'schoolmasters' (and very odd-looking schoolmasters, too) of such heroes as Hercules and Jason; here flows the little river Anauros, through which Jason carried the goddess Hera in the likeness of a poor old woman, and here are the monasteries of *Metéora*, perched dizzily on the peaks of lofty crags and separated from each other by deep ravines shagged with dark trees.

Mount Olympus, which the Ancient Greeks believed to be the home of the gods, rises to a height of 9755 feet, and its snow-crowned summit often looks from the distance like a streak of silver cloud in the sky. In the old days, when nobody ever climbed the mountain, the people of the plain declared that on the top the gods enjoyed perpetual spring-time. Actually, the atmosphere there is exceedingly cold, and the snows never melt entirely away.

Between the mountain of the gods on the north and the mountain of the centaurs on the south, the swift grey Peneios

Book of Other Lands

flows through the Vale of Tempe. So beautiful is this vale, with its rushing river, its dense woods of planes, oaks and firs, its rich undergrowth of aromatic lentisk and golden-berried laurel and its glorious glimpses of "the skyish head of blue Olympus," that for more than two thousand years poets have used it as a metaphor to convey the idea of the loveliest imaginable landscape. It was from Tempe that the god Apollo cut the laurel-slip which he afterward planted by the Castalian fountain, near his celebrated shrine at Delphi.

On our way from Tempe to Parnassus we may halt at Thermopylæ, a little town where nowadays small companies of rheumatic people resort, in order to bathe in the warm blue springs that bubble from its limestone cliffs, but where in the year 480 B.C. was fought the never-to-be-forgotten battle between the massed forces of Xerxes and the three hundred stubborn Spartans of whom not one remained to tell the tale . . .

The hopeless warriors of a living doom
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral strait.

Mount Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and the Nine Muses, rises to a height of 8070 feet. On its southern slope stood Delphi (once called Pytho), with its splendid temple to the god of poetry and its weird cave, whence dizzying fumes ascended. These fumes were supposed to inspire Apollo's priestess with the gift of prophecy, and people accepted as the very words of the god the wild phrases which she uttered in her prophetic trance. This priestess was called the Pythia, and at one time the holders of the office exercised a remarkable influence upon the destinies of whole nations. Kings and captains came from far and near to consult the Pythia. Before beginning to answer the questions of these pilgrims she would wash her hair in the holy waters of the Castalian fountain and crown her head with leaves from the laurels planted there by Apollo himself. Sometimes she even went so far as to *eat* a few of the leaves, which can have been neither pleasant-tasting nor wholesome fare. The answers of the oracle were so far from being frank or plain that the word 'oracular' has come to mean mysterious and non-committal. For example, when

Greece and Turkey

Croesus, King of Lydia, consulted the Pythia as to the probable result of the campaign which ended in his defeat by Cyrus, King of Persia, at the battle of Thymbra, she replied, "When Croesus crosses the river Halys a great empire will be overthrown." It was quite true; only, unfortunately for the Lydian king, she did not explain *whose* empire, and it turned out to be his *own*! Nero was much annoyed because the oracle expressed disapproval of his violent deeds, and, in revenge, plundered the temple of the Delphic Apollo. Finally, after its importance had steadily declined for several centuries, it was abolished by the Emperor Theodosius in the year A.D. 385.

Sailing to the north-east of the Cyclades, the traveller will leave on his right the silver peaks of Chios, an island famed of old for its rich red wine and its fair white marble, and the pine-forests and fig-orchards of Lesbos (Mitylene) once a centre of literary culture, where boys came from cities as distant as Rome to study the art of the poet and the orator, and where was born a famous Greek poetess, Sappho "of the violet locks." Still steering north, he will reach the isle of Tenedos, where the Greeks withdrew their fleet during the Trojan War in order to make the men of Troy believe that they had departed for good. The mainland due east of this little island was once known as the Plain of Troy, and there stood the city concerning which the Greek poet Homer sang one of the most famous and most beautiful narrative poems of all time, the *Iliad*. (Ilium was another name for Troy.) This marshy plain is now called the Troad; through it flow two rivers of ancient renown, the Simois (now dubbed the Dombrek) and the Scamander (the Mendere). The land between these two rivers, which have shifted their beds rather often and rather far since the days of Hector and Agamemnon and Achilles, was the scene of many a fierce battle between Greeks and Trojans. "The topless towers of Ilium" fell in flames more than three thousand years ago, and only stained and battered fragments of walls mark the place where the city of Priam once stood: the Simois, where the horses of the Trojans drank, the Scamander, in whose golden waters the three goddesses

Book of Other Lands

Hera, Athene and Aphrodite laved their long tresses, have each shrunk to a tawny trickle; but no one who had ever heard the tale of Troy retold, however briefly, however simply, could stand unthrilled upon that now-desolate plain.¹

Both these rivers have their source upon Mount Ida, "many-fountained Ida," whither the gods are said to have repaired to watch the progress of the Trojan War in the plain far below, and where the shepherd-prince Paris encountered the three goddesses, fresh from their dip in the Scamander, and had to choose which of them should receive the golden apple from his hand. In Tennyson's poem "Ænone" there is a marvellously vivid description of the scene:

The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel.

When we set foot upon the Plain of Troy we left Greece and Europe behind us, and reached the land of Asia Minor, of which a great part is called Turkey in Asia. To the south and east of "many-fountained Ida" lie the half-forgotten ruins of cities whose names, once rich in romantic and sacred associations, have altered almost beyond recognition. Such are Bergamo, Sart, Ayasolook and Konas. What romance, what holy memories, do these uncouth names suggest? None. But these places were once Pergamos, Sardis, Ephesus and Colossæ. Pergamos, like Athens, had an Acropolis, crowned with glorious temples. It had a library of priceless scrolls which Cleopatra carried off to enrich the library at Alexandria. There stood one of the Seven Churches of Asia. But in the first century A.D. the Pergamites were so wicked that St John the Divine wrote of their city as a place "even where Satan's seat is" (*Rev.* ii. 13). Three hundred years earlier one of the Egyptian Pharaohs, jealous of the fame of the Asiatic

¹ See H. L. Havell, *The Story of the Iliad* (Harrap).

Greece and Turkey

Greeks for learning, stopped the export from Egypt of that papyrus (the inner fibre of the papyrus reed) upon which alone he thought that books could be written. The resourceful Pergamites promptly invented a 'new writing-material, made of sheepskin, dubbed by the Romans "*charta Pergamena*." And we call it 'parchment' for that reason, to this day. The modern town is also a centre of leather-dressing, but it is crinkly morocco leather, dyed in gay or dusky hues, which is made there, not smooth, pale leather for the use of the scribe.

The towns which stand on, or near, the sites of these ancient strongholds of pagan and Christian culture are Turkish towns. You see there the flat-topped, almost windowless houses, the domed mosques, the irregularly cobbled streets, and all the colour, confusion, and crudity characteristic of a place built and inhabited chiefly by Turks. Among the people there is a delightful variety of costume, for though the Turks are in possession, they have to share the field with some who were there before them and some who have arrived since. Agriculture is carried on with implements that have changed hardly at all since the days of the Patriarch Abraham. On either side of the Dardanelles you will find, mingling with the swarthy Turks and their darkly muffled women-folk, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, and Jews. The markets, with their low-roofed stalls open to the street, are not unlike those of Persia and Cairo. One stall will be dangling with curly-toed, heel-less scarlet slippers, another will be heaped high with brass pots, or fretwork inlaid with white bone and mother-of-pearl, and yet another with melons and pumpkins, figs and grapes. And always you see a procession of patient donkeys, varied now and then by sulky, swaying camels.

South-east of Bergamo lies Sart, the 'Sardis' of *Revelation* iii. 1-6, the seat of one of the Seven Churches of Asia to which St John the Divine addressed the famous document which is the last in the New Testament. The other six Churches were at Ephesus, Pergamos, Smyrna, Thyatira (now Ak-hissar), Philadelphia (Allahshehr), and Laodicea, now a desolate ruin

Book of Other Lands

called by the Turks the "Old Castle." In pagan times Sardis was a wealthy and luxurious city. Thither came a company of Spartans, in the sixth century B.C., seeking gold with which to adorn the face of a statue of the god Apollo at Amyclæ. Through Sardis ran the river Pactolus, which rises on Mount Tmolus, and which once bore deposits of gold from the mines with which the mountain was seamed. The legend declared that Midas had bathed in that river, and that it was his touch which had turned its sands into pure gold. In that case Cræsus, King of Lydia, had much reason to thank the god Dionysus for his answer to the foolish prayer of the Phrygian king, for, according to the historian Varro, it was the golden sands of Pactolus whence the fabulous wealth of Cræsus was chiefly derived. Except for the ruins of a stadium, an open-air theatre, and two fragmentary Christian churches, little trace remains at Sart of the splendours of other days. But the traveller who follows the course of the Pactolus toward the deep ravine separating Mount Tmolus from the site of the city of Cræsus will be rewarded by a glimpse of two beautiful Ionic columns half-buried in the sloping earth behind the site of the Acropolis of Sardis. These are all that can now be seen of the temple raised by Alexander the Great on the foundations of a yet more ancient temple dedicated to Cybele, another name for the kindly earth-goddess Ceres.

The squalid and fever-smitten townlet of Ayasolook stands, among low-lying plantations of melons and figs, near the ruins of one of the most myth-haunted cities of the antique world—the city of Ephesus. This city stood on rising ground to the north-west of the modern Turkish settlement, but long before its citizens raised to their patron goddess Diana one of the most magnificent temples ever built with hands, the spot was associated with legends of the old gods. Pan frequented its marshes when he wooed the nymph Syrinx in vain, and after she had been transformed into that reed from which he made the first Pan's pipes. The Amazons, the women-warriors, in retreat before the heroes Hercules and Theseus, sought refuge upon the mound already sacred to Diana. When we pass from the misty age of myths to the clearer air of history, we

Greece and Turkey

find Ephesus a centre of culture and magnificence, with a school of art where sculptors and painters learned to create masterpieces. Apelles, the most celebrated painter of pre-Christian days, was born and studied there; and there, according to the Ephesians themselves, was born a greater than he—the poet Homer. It is a little unfortunate that six *other* cities made the same proud boast. Hence the saying :

Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

Students of New Testament history will not have to be reminded that it was at Ephesus that the Apostle Paul began the third of his great missionary journeys through Asia Minor, nor that it was to the Ephesian Christians that he wrote from his Roman prison : “ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,” and to them that he addressed the stirring exhortation to “ put on the whole armour of God.” The land of the Galatians, the “ foolish Galatians,” whom he visited more than once, and to whom he had such stern things to say, lies due east of Ephesus. In order to look upon fragments of the great temple of Diana, it is not necessary to make the toilsome journey across the dreary wastes or among the volcanic peaks and fertile valleys of Asia Minor. Two of the jasper pillars that once formed part of the building were taken by Constantine the Great and set up in his Church of Santa Sophia at Constantinople ; other portions of the temple found their way to Pisa, in Italy ; others, again, have found a resting-place in the British Museum. But when Paul preached the gospel at Ephesus the temple was in all its glory, and the aged stump of an olive-tree¹ which was the most holy of its treasures was hidden deep in gold and jewels. Goldsmiths and silversmiths flourished mightily in Ephesus, and did what would now be called ‘ a roaring trade ’ in silver models of the image of Diana. Everyone will remember

¹ There is some uncertainty as to this tree ; various historians have given varying accounts of it, calling it now a cedar, now a beech, now an ebony-tree. Others say the idol was not of wood, but was a meteoric stone.

Book of Other Lands

the alarm of the Ephesian silversmiths when, owing to the rapid spread of the new religion, the number of pilgrims dwindled and with it the demand for their wares, and how the mob got excited, and "all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!'" However great she may have been, Paul of Tarsus had powers above and beyond hers, or theirs who worshipped her. Timothy, his "own son in the faith," was, according to early Christian tradition, the first Bishop of Ephesus; thither repaired St John the Divine, after his release from that imprisonment on Patmos during which he wrote the Book of Revelation. But now it is Mohammed, and not Diana, who has driven forth the Christians from the place of her vanished glories. The church built by the Emperor Justinian on the foundations of an older one said to have been built by St John, is now a mosque.

Three miles north of the Turkish town of Konas lie the ruins of the city of Colossæ, where dwelt those Christian converts to whom Paul addressed the Epistle to the Colossians, and to whom he wrote, "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."

If the traveller should now decide to turn his face northward to the Sea of Marmora, it will not be because he has beheld all the wonders of Asia Minor, but because he does not wish to spend the remainder of his days plodding from one to the other. He may decide, before he crosses the Sea of Marmora, to wend eastward and have one glimpse of the dazzling silver peak of Ararat, the mountain where the Ark is said to have grounded after the Flood, and where three countries—Turkey, Russia, and Persia—meet. On either side of the Turco-Russian frontier lies the half-obliterated land of Armenia, once a kingdom powerful enough to perturb the Romans. The king of Armenia was the first of all the monarchs of the earth to embrace Christianity, and for two hundred years the country was a cradle and a stronghold of Christian art and learning in the East. From the grim and frowning Armenian mountain-range the two great rivers of Mesopotamia flow—

Greece and Turkey

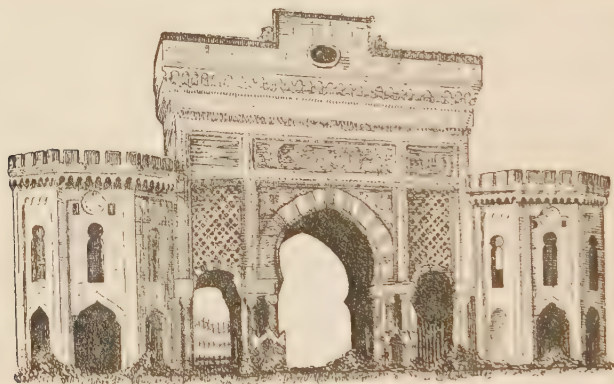
the Tigris and the Euphrates. Thence came the little beast that we call the ermine (*i.e.* the Armenian one), and that the Romans called the "Pontic mouse"; and from the fertile lowlands came the apricot, which they called the "Armenian apple."

Before landing upon the northern shore of the Sea of Marmora we must halt at Smyrna, one of the most important and, until the recent devastating fire, one of the most picturesque seaports in Asia Minor. There you will find fragments of Greek temples, Roman walls, early Christian churches, Saracenic houses, fortresses reared by Genoese seafarers, and the tombstones of long-dead Spanish Jews. It was there that "Timur built his ghastly tower of forty thousand human skulls." Many beautiful and useful things come from Smyrna: woollen rugs of rich hues, sponges, liquorice, and, of course, raisins and figs. Who has not seen the name of this many-coloured seaport branded on the thin wooden lid of a box in which lie layers of flat golden figs, sometimes with a little flat green leaf on the top? If the traveller should decide to make the journey from Smyrna to Constantinople by sea he will pass through the Dardanelles, leaving on his right the stern crags of Gallipoli, that are now sacred places in British and in Anzac eyes. His ship will enter the Sea of Marmora by way of the Hellespont, that strait across which Xerxes threw a bridge of boats when he invaded Greece. It was the scene, too, of the nightly swimming feat of Leander, a young man of Abydos, who was drowned on the last of his many dark and watery journeys to visit his beloved Hero, a priestess in the temple of Venus at Sestos. When Lord Byron imitated Leander's example, and swam the Hellespont, he found that the swim lasted just an hour and ten minutes.

Constantinople stands not upon two hills, like Jerusalem, but upon seven, like Rome. On the Asiatic shore of the peacock blue Bosphorus a gleam of milk-white walls among the dark cypress-trees reveals Scutari, where Florence Nightingale did such mighty and memorable things in the old military hospital during the Crimean War. On the northern, or European shore, the many-coloured, patchwork city of Stamboul

Book of Other Lands

and the pale, Western-looking villas of Pera, the European quarter, overpeer each other above the crowded river, where ships of many types lie at anchor and nimble little two-prowed boats called *caïques* dart to and fro. Before the recent upheavals which shifted the centre of Turkish government from Constantinople to Angora, in Anatolia, and which transformed it from a Sultanate to a Republic, the streets of the old capital were full of colour and romance. Every Turk wore the *tarbush*, or fez, every Turkish lady the *yashmak*, or white face-



ADRIANOPLE GATE, CONSTANTINOPLE

veil, and the muffling black outdoor cloak characteristic of the Moslem woman all over the East. It is difficult to imagine how much duller the steep streets and the long quays will look now that all sorts of dingy European hats have replaced the red felt caps, and the veil and cloak are rapidly disappearing.

When the traveller has escaped from the eager clutches of the *hamadiyehs*, or porters, who contend with each other for the privilege of shouldering his trunk, he is whirled away in a ramshackle victoria whose meagre but active little horses rattle up and down the steep streets with an impetuosity rather trying to the timid.

In Stamboul, the Turkish quarter, the houses are of the true Oriental type, with inner courtyards, jutting upper stories, latticed windows, and hidden gardens where roses, pome-

Greece and Turkey

granates, mulberries, and pumpkins grow in delightful confusion. The walls are chiefly of wood—a frequent cause of destructive fires—and painted a vivid crimson, but embedded in them you will see a queer medley of other building material in the form of jasper or porphyry pillars, or slabs of rose-coloured, silver-grey, or green-veined marble carved with fragments of figures in relief or morsels of inscriptions in Greek. Thus is the fabric of the ancient Christian and imperial city of Constantinople, and the even more ancient Greek city of Byzantium, mingled with the ramshackle, picturesque houses of the Moslem city of Stamboul.

The furniture in the Turkish houses of the better class is also quaintly mixed. Side by side with low divans covered with Kurdish rugs, low tables of fretted wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and bowls and coffee-pots of chased and hammered brass or copper, you will be surprised to see cheap European mirrors, gramophones, oleographs, and home-sick-looking European chairs. The kitchen is an important part of the house, for the Turks are great eaters of pilau, and boiled lamb, and rich sweetmeats made with almonds and pistachio-nuts, and the cook, often a negress, has enough to do to watch the earthenware jars and the copper pans simmering on her primitive stove. To keep the charcoal fire alive, she often fans it vigorously with a turkey's wing. When, as is pretty frequently the case, only a narrow tow-path divides the house from the Bosphorus, an arch is dug here and there under the path so that a caique may slip underneath and unload passengers or merchandise at a door in the basement.

During the centuries that it was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire the gorgeousness and splendour of Constantinople were beyond all words. Dark-eyed emperors and dark-haired empresses, in garments heavy with gold and stiff with gems, dwelt among palaces and churches that seemed to be wrought of the rainbow clouds of sunset rather than of solid marble. All the wealth and pride and cruelty of East and West, and much of their wisdom and faith, met and were gathered together in the golden city of Constantine the Great.

From the sixth century, when it was rebuilt by Justinian, to

Book of Other Lands

the present day the crowning glory of that city has been the basilica of Santa Sophia, of Heavenly Wisdom, first built by Constantine himself. This masterpiece of Byzantine architecture is as unlike a pagan temple as it is unlike a Gothic or a Græco-Roman cathedral. Its beauty appeals rather to our sense of colour than to our sense of form, for its outlines are blurred by masses of clustering domes and huge expanses of

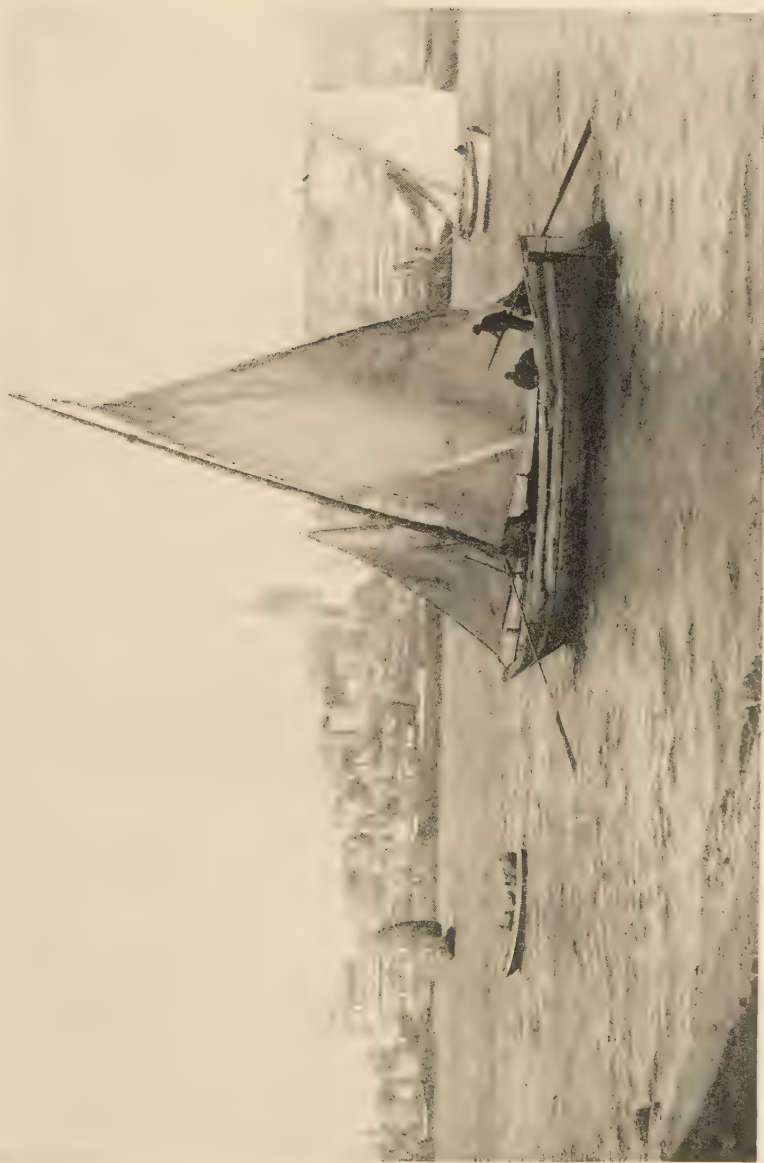


A STREET VENDOR OF ORANGES

coloured marbles. To deck the shrine of Heavenly Wisdom Justinian plundered the temples of the older gods, bringing granite and porphyry from Egypt, green marble from Libya, blue from Laconia, white veined with red from Phrygia, and black, with white veins, from the West. Osiris and Isis, Athene at Athens, and Apollo at Delos, as well as Diana at Ephesus, had to yield up their carved and polished columns for the greater glory of Justinian's God. Twelve purple pillars came from the Temple of the Sun at Baalbek, in Syria.

Justinian watched impatiently while the walls of Santa Sophia rose from the ground and his hundred anxious architects directed the toil of his ten thousand busy masons. Laying aside his imperial purple, he would don a tunic of coarse linen, take a stout stick instead of a sceptre in his hand, and go to and fro among the workmen, urging them on to greater efforts by promises of amazing gifts.

The inside of the basilica was so planned by Justinian that the pilgrim should halt on the threshold, dazzled and overwhelmed. Round the massed jewels and goldsmiths' work of the high altar sprang lilies of pure gold ; the doors of the



PERA AND GALATA VIEWED FROM THE BOSPHORUS
Photo E.N.A.



A VENDOR OF MELONS

Photo E.N.A.

Greece and Turkey

chancel-screen were of ivory, amber, and cedar, and three of them were cased in planks of polished wood said to have come from Noah's Ark ! The walls were completely covered with glittering mosaics, in which the forms of Christ and his Apostles were traced, many times larger than life. On Christmas Eve, in the year 548, Justinian beheld his completed work, and exclaimed exultantly, " Solomon, I have surpassed thee ! "

Many generations of Christians worshipped in Santa Sophia ; many thousands of Christian heads were bent and bared at its glorious portals. But if you go there to-day it is your shoes and not your hat that you must remove in token of reverence, for this place is a Christian church no longer. The mosaic figures high on its columned walls have been blotted out with whitewash, though it is said that in certain lights the form of Christ is still dimly and pitifully to be seen. The high altar has been cast down and swept away, and where it once stood a Moslem sheikh proclaims that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet. Great green discs bearing texts from the Koran swing from the lofty domed roof, and round the central cupola are inscribed, in Turkish characters, the words, " God is the light of the heavens and the earth." Lamps are so hung that their rays strike upward on to this text. And here and there among the lamps swing, of all things in the world, ostrichs' eggs ! Where once the prayers and hymns of the Christian Church filled the many-coloured vaults with solemn music, you now hear only the voices of the teachers reading passages from the Koran and the soft whirring of wings as the pigeons who have their nests in the niches of the roof swoop to and fro.

Santa Sophia was a Christian church until the year 1453, when the Turks crossed the Sea of Marmora and seized and sacked Constantinople. Thousands of hapless folk fled there for sanctuary, but not one was spared. The Sultan Mahmoud II rode on horseback over their mangled bodies, and tradition points to a dark smear high up on one of the walls as the imprint of his blood-soaked hand.

" I render thanks," cried the conqueror, as he rode through the streets slippery with blood, among flaming houses and

Book of Other Lands

crashing walls, "I render thanks to our Prophet for this goodly victory. But I pray him also to let me live long enough to subdue Rome, the fortress of Christianity, likewise. Then only shall I die happy." It is very consoling to know that he cannot have died happy.

Mosques rose on all sides in the conquered city, and minarets sprang up round the Christian churches now re-dedicated to Mohammed. Whatever we may think of the good qualities of



A WHIRLING DERVISH

the typical Turkish peasant, his courage in battle, his patience under affliction, his gleams of real kindness, no student of history could doubt that the ruling caste, the Pashas, were always and are still quite unfitted to govern either their own people or the more civilized people whom Mahmoud's fierce Asiatic cavalry trampled down five centuries ago. Stagnation, oppression and cruelty are the sure results of Turkish rule. It has turned the most fertile lands of the East into thirsty wildernesses; it has hampered every effort toward progress and reform. And those who can remember the pitiable condition of the Egyptian

fellahin under the Turkish yoke, and who pause to contrast what *was* with what *is*, are best able to tell us that it is better for every one, including the humbler and finer type of Turk himself, that that heavy yoke should be broken for ever.

After all, the Turk has no real place in Europe. Fine fellow though he may be, and sometimes is, he has not outgrown the rougher and more barbarous traditions of the Asiatic horsemen who were his ancestors. The Turks came from the high tableland of central Asia. They belong to the Mongolian family, like their brethren the Tartars and the people of Kurdistan. To that same fierce, restless, roving race belonged those dwellers on the steppes of northern Asia whose very name of 'Scythians' became a byword for barbarity, and whose daily life Matthew Arnold has described so vividly in

Greece and Turkey

"The Strayed Reveller," where he tells us how the high gods, looking down at the divers races of mankind,

see the Scythian
 On the wide Steppe, unharnessing
 His wheel'd house at noon.
 He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,
 Mare's milk and bread
 Baked on the embers :—all around
 The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-
 starred
 With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
 And flag-leaf'd iris-flowers.
 Sitting in his cart
 He makes his meal : before him, for long miles,
 Alive with bright green lizards,
 And the springing bustard-fowl,
 The track, a straight black line,
 Furrows the rich soil : here and there
 Clusters of lonely mounds,
 Topped with rough-hewn
 Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
 The sunny waste.

CHAPTER VII

FRANCE

MOST men love their native land, though some scarcely realize that they do, others could not tell you why, and others, again, are too shy to talk much about it. But the typical Frenchman *knows* that he loves France, he knows *why*, and he is not afraid to say it quite frankly. And, indeed, it is not difficult to understand his proud love for a country that is such a fair and kindly mother to her children, who gives them with both hands all the good things that the earth can give. Poets who were not Frenchmen have written tenderly of France, "the pleasant land of France," "immortal and indomitable France." The Frenchman has only to think, or speak, of *la patrie*, and all the glories of French history, French literature and art, and the varied beauties of the French countryside, rise up before him. And what a wonderful *patrie* is his, like a great book full of the loveliest-coloured pictures whose pages you turn with delight as you pass from Normandy to Brittany, from Brittany to Paris, and from Paris down to the Valley of the Loire, or to the Rhône and Provence!

The traveller from the East, and, occasionally, the traveller from the West, will disembark at Marseilles, which was a Phœnician seaport long before the Greeks and Romans anchored their galleys there; but it is better to begin at the top of the map and work our way down from the English Channel—*La Manche*, the sleeve, it is called in French—to the azure coast of the Mediterranean.

The first impression of the visitor who lands at Dieppe will probably be one of mild surprise at the way in which the train wanders through the cobbled streets as if it were a mere tame tram. Then he will notice that those streets are edged with high houses, white or pale pink, whose long narrow windows

France

are flanked by slated wooden shutters called *persiennes*. These shutters are a characteristic feature of the typical French house in every part of the country, just as the jutting, rounded *tourelles* at the angles of the walls are characteristic of the French baronial castle. Normandy is a land of orchards, of chalk cliffs dividing to let the curly Seine pursue its zigzag journey to the sea, of gnarled grey castles, and abbeys and cathedrals almost as closely interknit with English history as with the history of France. It is a green and kindly land, and must have seemed a haven of many delights to those sea-scarred Norse pirates who landed there in the ninth century, abandoned their dragon-prowed ships, and settled down to build castles and walled towns, and to defy the French barons who vainly tried to drive them back into the sea whence they came. Their descendants are the Normans of to-day, and by their sunny fair hair and their keen blue eyes many of them prove their blood-kinship with the Scandinavians with whom they now have nothing else in common.

The modern Normans are said to be, as the Scotch are said to be, a grasping people. Certainly a Norman farmer is a good hand at a hard bargain. But they are a fine, sturdy folk, and they make the most delicious cider! The peasant dress is less striking than that worn in Brittany and in the South, but it is pleasant to see the old dames coming in from the villages to towns like Rouen to sell their butter and vegetables and cheese in the fresh dewy hours of the morning, with snowy-white bonnets framing their sunburnt faces, and brightly-coloured shawls folded neatly round their shoulders, and ample aprons of blue or blue-and-white print. All over France workmen of all kinds wear the blue cotton blouse and the peaked *casquette* that are such a sensible and simple working-dress, and so much more agreeable to the eye than the dingy, nondescript tweeds affected by the English.

During the centuries that a Norman dynasty reigned over England, the history of the two countries was almost one. The Conqueror died at Rouen and was buried at Caen. Cœur de Lion, the most valiant and the best-loved of his descendants, built a mighty fortress on the chalky cliff above the Seine

Book of Other Lands

near Les Andelys, and bequeathed his heart to the cathedral of Rouen, where it was deposited in a silver casket before the high altar. It was in 1197 that Richard I began to build Château Gaillard. A year later the three outer lines of defence were finished, and the King exclaimed exultantly, "*Qu'elle est belle, ma fille d'un an !*" His "one-year-old daughter" was a damsel of vast proportions, for the donjon-keep, with its massive buttresses, its four-storied tower and its crenellated platform, was one of the greatest achievements of Norman military architecture.

The capital of Normandy, where the Viking dukes held their court, and where the Conqueror gave up the ghost after the burning of Nantes, is Rouen. Most unfortunately, the citizens of this exquisite old city were seized, some thirty years ago, by a fearful enthusiasm for "modern improvements." They started making broad new streets, where trams could clank freely to and fro, and in the process they destroyed the most wonderful old houses—gabled, carved, and latticed houses—that had been the background of the many-coloured pageant of Rouen history, that had seen Henry V enter the city in triumph, and Jeanne d'Arc led to execution. Still, much remains to enchant the eyes of the traveller who loves the past. He will linger beneath the Tour de la Grosse Horloge, which spans one of the narrow streets and holds an enormous clock with a richly wrought dial that has marked the passing of the minutes for more than five hundred years ; he will find it hard to tear himself away from the glorious cathedral, with its soaring spires, its glimmering, jewelled windows, its many monuments to long-dead princes and cardinals. Over the tomb of each cardinal, but high up, so that it is not very easily seen, hangs the red hat which marked his illustrious rank during his lifetime. The hats of the more recent have still a rich reddish tinge, but those that have swung aloft there for a certain number of years wax wan and pale, and finally become a sort of dull parchment colour, while their long tassels look like tufts of grey cobweb. Puissant dukes and lordly churchmen have dwelt in the fair, green land of Normandy, but in the little town of Yvetot, nestling

France

among the orchards where the queerly-clean white pigs pursue the fallen apples, there was for many centuries a man who could claim the title of king—the King of Yvetot. These ‘kings’ were said to be the descendants of a certain Gauthier, chamberlain to Clo-taire I of France, by whom he was slain in a fit of anger, and whose domain the sovereign afterward, as an act of penitence, elevated into a ‘kingdom.’ Yvetot remained exempt from military service all through the feudal period when other Norman towns had to send each its quota of fighting-men to serve its liege-lord in the field. As late as the eighteenth century there was a stout fellow who called himself “Roi d’Yvetot,” but when his majesty was unwise enough to pay a visit, with his ‘queen,’ to their brother-monarch in Paris, they were overwhelmed by the burlesque homage paid to them by the mocking courtiers of the ‘real’ king, and were glad to return to their pocket-handkerchief ‘kingdom’ among the apple-trees.

Very few Londoners who see the words “Tooting Bec” on an omnibus, or who go where that omnibus will take them and get out at Tooting Bec Common, have any idea that the place is so called because it belonged in the olden days to the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. Yet so it was. And Bec has another link with English history, for it was there that a young lawyer, Lanfranc by name, assumed the monkish cowl in 1042—a cowl which was transformed into the mitre of the Archbishop of Canterbury twenty-eight years later. Lanfranc’s



ROUEN CATHEDRAL, WEST FRONT

Book of Other Lands

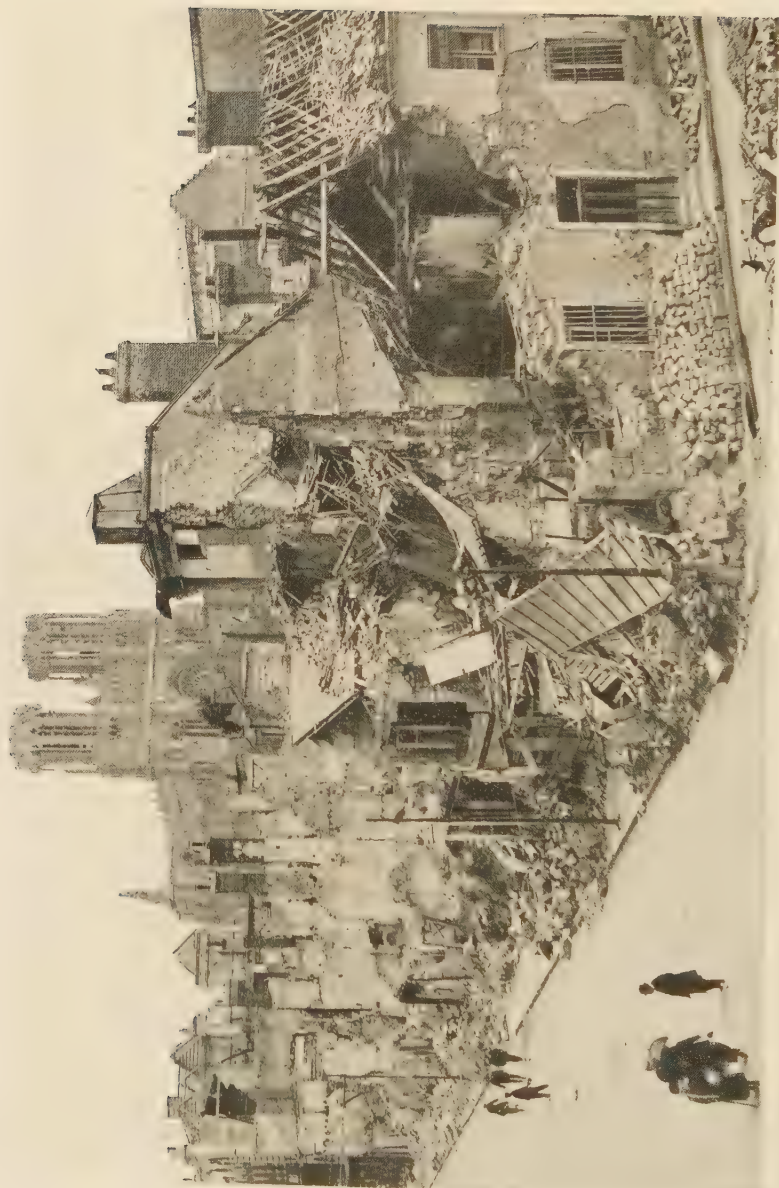
motive for becoming a monk was curious. He had been seized, robbed, and bound to a tree by a band of robbers in the forest between Avranches and Rouen, and during the night which he spent in solitude he tried to while away the hours by repeating the psalms and prayers which formed the accepted worship of the season, and found that not *one* remained in his memory. Then a great change of spirit came over him. He shed tears to think of how he had neglected holy things in order to pursue the unprofitable study of the law, and resolved that whenever he was released from his plight, he would make up for lost time. When he entered the then poor and humble monastery in the wooded valley of the Bec he can little have dreamed that he was taking the first step on the road which would lead him to an archbishop's throne.

Westward of Normandy lies a region fully as fascinating, but very different—the land of Brittany, known to Chaucer as Armoric-Bretagne, and to yet more remote writers as Armorica. This most ancient name is formed of two Celtic words, *ar*, upon, and *mori*, the sea. It was to distinguish England and Wales (and, after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, Scotland) from this *other* “Bretagne” that the adjective ‘Great’ was placed before Britain. The people belong to the same race as the Welsh, and have cousins among the Irish and the Scots. They are a mysterious people, whose origin, both in time and place, is so enveloped in darkness that even the wisest scholars cannot come to an agreement about it. They were certainly blood-brethren of the Early Britons, and their priests were Druids, like theirs, and their mode of worship, their temples and their tombs, were the same. Here and there in the south-western counties of England you will find circles of stones, like Stonehenge, or groups of stones, like those at Lanyon in Cornwall, which show that the Celts lived and died there. But in Brittany you find not far-scattered fragments but whole avenues and aisles of such monuments. At Trégastel, for example, the silvery sands are studded with huge blocks of ruddy-tawny rock, set up no one can tell how many thousands of years ago by the forbears of the Bretons of to-day. And at Carnac, westward



PARIS FROM THE TOP OF NOTRE DAME

Photo Donald McLeish



DEVASTATED RHEIMS

Photo: Donald McLeish

France

of Auray, where stands a miraculous well sacred to St Anne, there is a perfect forest of these gaunt, mysterious stones, rising from the wind-swept plain where grows that variety of stunted, aromatic heather which we in England call "Cornish heather." The names of many rivers and hills all over western Europe show how far afield the men who wrought these huge stones must have wandered in the dusk before the dawn of history. 'Afon' was their word for a river, and so we have the Avon, the Afton, the Aisne, the Vienne, the Punjaub (Five Rivers), and the Donau (Danube). 'Pen' or 'Ben' was what they called a hill, so we have *Ben Nevis*, *Penzance*, the *Apennines*, and the *Pindus*. The 'Car' of Carnac is the same as the 'Car' of Carmarthen, and is the Celtic for a stronghold.

The Bretons have forgotten their pre-Christian mythology, and reck as little of Arthur and Merlin as of Darius and Lao-tze, but they are still great lovers of legendary lore. The stones at Carnac, they say, were pagan soldiers who pursued good St Corneille, and were by him changed into their present craggy form! The loneliness of their country, its nearness to the sea, its grey stretches of marsh and its strange, misty, luminous skies, seem to have given a tinge of poetical melancholy to the Breton mind. Their music is wistful and sad. Some of their chants are probably far-off echoes of druidical hymns, and the cadences of many have an odd resemblance



A BRETON BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM

Book of Other Lands

to the songs sung, or played on the bagpipes, by the Highlanders of Scotland. Indeed, the Bretons have a sort of bagpipe of their own, called the *biniau*. Very wisely, they have resisted the temptation to abandon their characteristic dress, which has altered hardly at all since the fifteenth century. Those butterfly headdresses with vast white wings of stiffened muslin which in England are seen only depicted on ancient tombstones and monumental brasses are seen in Brittany on the heads of the Bretonnes. The men, too, have stuck to their loose knee-breeches, their short, thick gaiters, their black jackets sewn with rows of bright buttons. On their heads they may wear a broad hat with a shallow, rounded crown, or a sort of toque with a flap behind, or a fisherman's cap of red or dark blue wool. Here and there in the Breton villages you will meet a smart young tar, in the charming uniform of the French navy, with a cheery-scarlet pompom on the top of his cap. There are many Bretons in the naval forces of France, and they bring back quaint objects from Cochin China and Sénégal to decorate their homes; those rather sombre homes whose inner walls are of rough granite, and whose 'bedrooms' are often beds like the shelves of a cupboard sunk deep into the kitchen wall and closed, like a cupboard, with oaken doors. (You see the same odd arrangement in Holland and in Scotland.) Overhead hang branches of sweet herbs, and, perhaps, leathery-looking, dusky-brown hams. And always, on a little bracket, there is a coloured image of the Virgin Mary, in glazed pottery or painted plaster.

The people are, on the whole, taller than their kinsfolk the Welsh; they are dark more often than fair, and the faces of the men have the high cheek-bones and well-hewn chins characteristic of a certain type of Scot.

Farming is a thankless task on these salt marshes, with their wiry grass and rough heather. Most of the Bretons are fishermen, and leave to the women and children the care of the flocks and herds that find good enough grazing where neither corn nor barley will thrive. Many of these fishermen spend the whole summer on the fishing-banks off Iceland,

France

where cod abound, and where sometimes they are kept busy for hours at a stretch hauling in the huge, flapping white fish by the weird light of the sun that never sinks below the horizon line. The coming of winter means that the fleet of fishing-boats must return to port, with their cargoes of gutted and salted cod. Some, alas, do not return, and for them tablets are set up in the wind-battered Breton churches, asking prayers for the soul of some brave "Laumec" (Guillaume) or "Fantec" (François) "drowned off the coast of Iceland," or, simply, "lost at sea." For those who *do* return a special *Pardon* (which in Brittany means something between a fair, a pilgrimage, and a procession) is held on the eighth of December, the day sacred to Our Lady of Good Tidings, the patroness of fisherfolk. Above the grey granite cottages all the bells of the village rejoice; from the windows hang white sheets stuck all over with sturdy ivy and cheerful holly. The girls wear their prettiest white caps, some like butterflies, some like nautilus shells, and their finest trinkets of iron, set with 'jewels' of coloured glass. Some of them are already engaged to be married, and are thanking Our Lady of Good Tidings for the safe return of their *fiancés* from the cruel, mysterious seas of the unsetting sun; others are hoping that when the *next* Pardon comes round they may have the same cause for thankfulness.

"Were an angel to descend from heaven," says a Breton writer, "he would alight first upon the *Kreizeker* at St Pol de Léon." This might be rather difficult, even for an angel, since the *Kreizeker* is a lofty and sharply-pointed spire. The Bretons declare that the word means 'the Devil's Tower,' and of course there is a legend about it. When the church to which the tower belongs was being built, Old Nick—or *Vieux Guillaume*, as they call him there—decided that he himself would take charge of the job, and complete it in his own honour. So he reared this beautiful spire, with its delicate pinnacles and its slender, fluted windows. Then, just as he was fixing the golden weathercock on the summit, St Pol, the patron saint of the town, appeared, to the consternation of *Vieux Guillaume*, sprinkled the spire with holy water, and

Book of Other Lands

dedicated it solemnly to God. This saint has a glorious cathedral all to himself in the town that is called after him. Yet he was no Breton, but a Briton. Paulus Aurelian was his very Roman-sounding name; but he was born in England, and it was as a missionary that he came to Armorica, or Brittany, in the year 530, sixty-six years before St Augustine brought the Gospel of Christ to Kent!



A BRETON VENDOR OF IMAGES

St Pol loved his fellow-men well, and strove earnestly for their good, but better still did he love the little birds. In this way he reminds us of St Francis, whom we shall meet later at Assisi. Now St Pol was grieved when he heard that flocks of his feathered friends were plundering the fields and orchards of his master, St Hydultus. So he went forth and called to the culprits that they must follow him whithersoever he led them. They obeyed, and found themselves inside the monastery walls and in the presence of St Hydultus himself. The elder saint rebuked them gently for their greed, and when he had given them his blessing, the younger saint bade them fly away again, which they must have been very glad to do. And, of course, the fields and orchards of St Hydultus were ravaged no more!

St Pol had remarkable powers over minerals as well as over animals. It is said that when he wished to check the encroachments of the sea at a certain point on the Breton coast where his sister, a nun, dwelt in a convent, he simply put a row of little pebbles along the beach, and the pebbles promptly grew into great big rocks, and the sea took the hint and advanced no farther. And he knew how to manage larger and more alarming creatures than birds. Once he led a dragon captive, using his stole as a leash. You can see the very stole, a strip of Byzantine embroidery wrought long ago by Greek



A WAYSIDE SHRINE ERECTED ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DEATH OF JEANNE D'ARC

Photo Donald McLeish



WASHING-DAY BY THE RIVER AT TOUL

Photo Donald McLeish

France

hands on the shores of the Sea of Marmora, in the little Breton church of Enez-Baz to this day !

Though the charm of Paris is quite French, the traveller would make a great mistake who judged France and the French from Paris and the Parisians. Beyond the capital, with its gay sparkle and stir, lies the vast, quiet countryside, where the unwearying cultivators till the bountiful fields, and where communities of simple, home-loving, industrious people live in placid towns and villages that seem to have been fast asleep for at least a hundred years. To English eyes the typical French farm-house may seem to rub shoulders a little too closely with the cowshed and the pigstye, but if you step inside, you will see that the red-paved kitchen is spotlessly clean, and if you should be invited to share a meal with even the simplest family you will marvel at the natural skill in cooking which all Frenchwomen appear to possess. It is true that only in the large towns can you get a really good cup of tea. But who *wants* tea in a land where the coffee is something to dream about, and where the delicious bread that goes with it is rolled into narrow, crinkly loaves more than a yard long ?

The typical Parisian, like the typical Cockney, is—and knows himself to be—much quicker-witted than his country cousins. And many amusing stories are told in French books about the French *Gavroche*, the little street-sparrow, who will play all sorts of clever pranks to win a couple of *sous*. But he is great-hearted, too, and a French poet has said of him :

*Il faut savoir mourir pour s'appeler Gavroche.*¹

He and his elders, the poor of Paris, are very like those ancient Gauls of whom the Romans wrote that they loved wordy battles, quips and arguments. The people of Normandy and Auvergne, on the other hand, are inclined to be silent and slow.

The charm of Paris is not easy to describe : nor is it easy to forget. Perhaps it lies partly in the vivid and intense movement and colour of her everyday life, the beauty of her open spaces, her fine bridges, statues, palaces, and parks. Her sky and her river have enchantments of their own. Nothing anywhere

¹ He must know how to die who would bear the name of 'Gavroche.'

Book of Other Lands

else is quite the same. When Julius Cæsar conquered Gaul he found, where the cathedral of Notre Dame now stands, a strip of muddy island which he proceeded to fortify, and which bore for a time the name, 'Julii Civitas'—the town, or stronghold of Julius. Its other name, Lutetia, came from the abundant clay, *lutum*, found in the vicinity. In spite of the mud the Romans made it a military centre, built a temple to Jupiter, and, in the early years of the Christian era, chose it as their imperial winter quarters in Gaul. The open space still called the Champ de Mars was a drill-ground for the legionaries. It was here that the soldiers of Julian the Apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great, proclaimed him emperor. And here, on the spot where paganism had seemed to triumph in the person of the anti-Christian Julian, a Christian church was dedicated to St Stephen in the year 375, only twelve years after the emperor's death on the spear of a Persian cavalryman near Ctesiphon.

From that small ridge of mud rising above the waters of the Seine grew the great city which we see to-day, with its beautiful gardens and fountains and statues, its wonderful shops, famous especially for ladies' dresses and children's toys, its bridges bearing the initial N to show by whom they were built, its domes and spires and squares, and its fringe of woods to the west. The cathedral of Notre Dame has had much to suffer at the hands of the people of Paris. Sometimes in a deluded anxiety to improve the ancient edifice, sometimes in a mad desire to desecrate or destroy it, those people have at various times dealt cruelly with the most precious of all their possessions. In 1771 the western porch was smashed up, to give a more free scope for royal processions. When the Revolution was at its height, the images of saints were smashed, statues of the cynic Voltaire and the head-in-air Rousseau placed in their niches, an opera dancer wearing the red cap of Liberty was enthroned on the high altar, there to be worshipped as the Goddess of Reason by a roaring mob of revolutionaries. Two other dangers has the cathedral escaped. In 1871, during the tumults which followed the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War, an effort was made to set Notre Dame on fire,

France

but luckily the medical students of the Hôtel Dieu hospital arrived in the nick of time, and quenched the flames. Lastly, the roof was scarred by a German bomb during the Great War. Now the stone demons on the topmost towers grin down upon a peaceful Paris, and let us hope nobody will ever try to harm their splendid dwelling again ! They enjoy a really delightful view, those stone demons. They can see the sweeping curves of the Seine, the spires and domes and tree-tops of Paris, and, if their carven eyes are keen enough, the anglers sitting patiently on the quays, the fierce little taxis hurtling madly through the streets, the bare-legged schoolboys in dark overalls and peaked caps scampering to and from the *lycée* where they have such hard lessons to learn.

For some time before the War, and ever since, the French people have shown an increasing interest in sport. We all know the record of that fine boxer Georges Carpentier, and how Mademoiselle Lenglen, and Monsieur Borotra, and other French tennis-players, distinguished themselves at Wimbledon ! And yet it is not very many years since the only recreation permitted to the boarders in the French *lycées* was to stroll in the playground and chat to each other ! All that is changed now. If the carven demons on the top of Notre Dame can see as far as the Champs Elysées, they will see moving patches of gay colour gather and disperse at certain points there at certain times of year ; but unless somebody goes up and explains to them that these moving patches are football blazers, I do not see how the poor demons can possibly understand what is happening.

How many stirring and thrilling events have happened in the vast cathedral below, while the stone demons grinned and scowled above ! There, while the blue, pungent smoke of the incense climbed to the interlocking arches, St Louis received his pilgrim's staff ere he set sail for the Holy Land ; there the baby-king Henry VI was crowned King of France ; there a very different sort of monarch, the bluff and breezy Henri of Navarre, proclaimed his change of faith by publicly attending Mass ; there Napoleon, robed in dark red velvet sprinkled with golden bees, took the imperial diadem from the hands of the

Book of Other Lands

startled Pope and himself placed it upon his brows. Napoleon's crown is in the Museum of the Louvre, but in the treasury of Notre Dame there is another crown, not of gold or silver, but of grey and prickly fibres, which is regarded by millions of people with very different feelings. According to an ancient tradition, this is the crown of thorns. It was given to St Louis by the emperor of Constantinople, and when the saintly king returned to France he built, in order to hold the relic, the lovely little Sainte Chapelle which still stands on the Île de la Cite, not far from Notre Dame, though it no longer fulfils the purpose of its founder. If, when you have blinked at the jewelled brightness of its windows, you leave the Sainte Chapelle and cross the Pont Neuf—which has not been *neuf* since the year 1578—a little walk will bring you to the Louvre, once a royal palace, the scene of many grim and gorgeous episodes in French history, and now one of the most marvellous picture-galleries in the whole world. The treasures of the Louvre are so numerous, we must not pause to do more than glance at some of the best known. Among these are Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," that mysteriously-smiling dark lady with mocking lips and beautiful folded hands; Titian's handsome, disdainful "Young Man with the Glove"; Raphael's brightly-coloured "Belle Jardinière," and Madame Vigée-Lebrun's charming portrait of herself and her small daughter. Of the statues two stand out, unforgettable, the *Niké*—the Winged Victory—from Samothrace, and the Venus from the island of Milos. Both statues have been grievously battered; neither has any arms, but Venus still has a head and the poor *Niké* has none. One statue seems to be the embodiment of triumphant energy, the other of noble repose.

Paris has many museums, but none, perhaps, more interesting than the Musée Carnavalet, which is devoted entirely to objects associated with the history of Paris herself. Here you will see fragments of the Roman temple that once stood on the islet of Lutetia, and red caps of Liberty worn during the Reign of Terror, and Napoleon's tooth-brush, with some pink-coloured powder still on it, and the armchair in which Voltaire breathed his last. The house itself was once the home of that

France

charming lady Madame de Sévigné, whose letters to her daughter are the most delightful ever written by any woman, in any land, at any epoch of the world's history.

Whether you feel the spell of Napoleon's personality or not, you will wish to see his tomb in the Hôtel des Invalides, the old soldiers' hospital, before you leave Paris. Perhaps you may struggle a little against the spell, and try to remind yourself that, great man though he was, he did much harm, and caused much suffering. All this is true. But all this seems to fade somehow into the distance when you stand in the deep marble well under the high, shining dome of the Invalides and look at the ponderous tomb of dark, purple-red Finland granite which holds the dust of the mighty emperor. The pillars which encircle it are upheld by statues of mournful angels in pure white marble, and between them are bronze stands, something like umbrella-stands, with clumps of tattered flags, the spoils of many a famous battle-field. "It is my desire" Napoleon had written in his last will, "that my dust should rest upon the shores of the Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I have loved so well." Nineteen years after his death at St Helena that desire was fulfilled.

What Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are to the Londoner, the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne are to the Parisian. The Avenue des Champs Elysées was planned and planted by Marie de Médicis, the mother of Queen Henrietta Maria of England; but it was Napoleon who raised the imposing Arc de Triomphe at the western end, to celebrate the victories won by him in 1805 and 1806. After his overthrow the sculptures representing these victories were allowed to remain, but another group, emblematic of the Peace of 1815, was rather oddly added to them. Somehow one does not imagine the Elysian Fields of Greek legend as being, like the Elysian Fields of Paris, absolutely bare of grass or turf. You will find no meadows of asphodel between the straight lines of trees planted by Queen Marie. But there is plenty of colour and movement, for this is the favourite playground of the small Parisians, and here they flit about like bright butterflies in their gaily striped and checked garments, or revolve solemnly on

Book of Other Lands

miniature merry-go-rounds, or watch a Punch and Judy show, sucking barley-sugar the while. And the beribboned caps of their *bonnes*, their *nou-nous*, as Nannies are called in France, nod like poppies as they sit and chat on the iron benches, keeping one eye on the bare-legged little boys and girls in their charge. Very short frocks and very short socks were worn by these small sons and daughters of France long before the breezy and pretty fashion spread to America and thence to England and Australia ; and at one time the children of other lands looked heavy and stodgy and over-draped beside these free-limbed, fleet little creatures.

If you turn to the left by the Arc de Triomphe, you will be well on your way to the Bois de Boulogne—the “ Bois,” as Parisians call it, for short. The old woods were cut down during the siege of Paris in 1870 ; hence the trees that grow there now are all the same age and practically all the same size. But the Bois is a perpetual delight, with its lakes and waterfalls, its fine riding-road, its Allée des Potins (Gossip Walk), and its cool effects of depth and distance and greenness, so grateful to the eyes after the dust and glare of Paris. In the *Quentin Durward* days the Bois was part of the forest of Rouvray, and the Grand-forester was Olivier le Daim, Louis XI's barber, that sly and sinister personage who hardly seemed to possess the qualities necessary for a “ Jovial Huntsman.”

Much more might be said about the wonders and delights of *la ville lumière*, but the castles of the Loire call us south, and the ancient towers of Provence, the land of the Troubadours, lies beyond, and beyond that again the Riviera, with its groves of mimosa by the intensely blue sea, its stiff, spiky palms, its white villas climbing up the hills above the sun-steeped, mirth-loving resorts of Nice and Cannes and Mentone. North-east of Paris lies the land of the great Gothic cathedrals, Amiens and Rheims. This last, a marvel of beauty, with its clustering throngs of carven saints and angels and its gorgeous stained glass, was persistently shelled during the War, and gaping holes were torn in the roof beneath which kings of France have been crowned and anointed with the sacred oil

France

said to have been brought from heaven by a dove for the coronation of St Louis. Amiens, though its exquisite arches were shaken by heavy shell-fire, escaped more lightly. These cathedrals have an interest for Britons over and above their beauty, for they are, in form and substance, the sisters of Westminster Abbey, Lincoln and Ely and York. As we journey southward, we shall see the architecture changing, and the influence of the classical revival in the early sixteenth century making itself felt everywhere.

The Loire runs through scenery which nature and art have joined hands to beautify. The river itself is beautiful, the woods and hills that fringe its banks are beautiful, and each of the famous castles that mark its course has some singular beauty or charm of its own. It is a 'literary' river, for Ronsard, sweetest of French singers, was born at Vendôme and Rabelais, the bluff, genial humorist-philosopher, at Chinon, near the confluence of the Loire and the Vienne. Most of the castles date from the reign of François I, when a sudden craze for building seized the great nobles of France, and most of them have elaborate mantelpieces carved with mythological characters, curving staircases with balustrades of complicated stone-work, and rounded tourelles whose air of mediæval fierceness is softened by the panels of Renaissance sculpture skilfully introduced into the plan.

Of all the towns on the Loire Orléans has probably most romantic interest for the British and American traveller,



CLOWN AND TAMBOURINE CAR IN
CARNIVAL AT NICE

Book of Other Lands

although little remains to-day of the actual houses which Jeanne d'Arc beheld when she rode into the place she had delivered from the besieging English one May day in the year 1429. The cathedral where she heard Mass after the victory has been burnt and rebuilt, the greater part of the house where she lodged has been pulled down, and few of the richly ornamented, handsome old houses that still remain to testify to the ancient splendours of the town were built until her



THE CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES, ON THE LOIRE

ashes had been scattered for a hundred long years in the Seine at Rouen. But Jeanne is always the Maid of Orléans, and Orléans will always be the city of the Maid. Nor does the city forget her. In its central square it has erected a statue of her, on horseback, which is probably neither more nor less like her than any of the other imaginary portraits which have multiplied of late on both sides of the Channel.

When Jeanne set out to deliver Orléans her starting-point was the fair city of Blois, made famous then and since by its castle, which stands on a hill where the ubiquitous Romans had a camp. The most impressive part of the building as we see it now dates from the reigns of Louis XII, who was

France

born there, and François I, who entertained the Emperor Charles V within the older walls, and who built the astonishing staircase, upon which his device, a salamander, constantly appears and reappears.

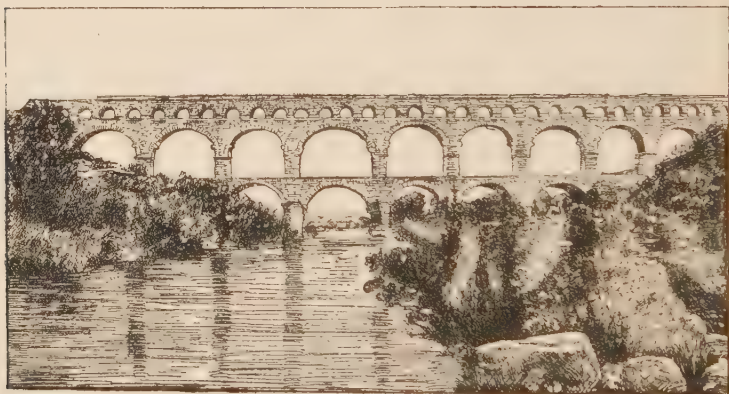
We shall now come across traces of the Romans at every turn. They built a town where Tours is now, and called it Cæsarodunum. Not long after their horse-tailed helmets had vanished from the Loire valley, the first Christian queen of France, the kind-hearted Clothilde, died. Of her is told a charming legend. Before she had succeeded in winning her husband, King Clovis, to her own faith he was a very fierce fellow, and strongly objected to her Christian habit of charity to the poor and needy. One day he encountered Clothilde and noticed that she was holding up the skirts of her mantle, and suspected, with truth, that she was hiding some loaves of bread, intended for distribution among the beggars round the palace-gate. In great wrath Clovis bade her drop her mantle, at the same time swearing dreadful oaths that if he found that she *was* carrying food to the poor, both she and her *protégés* should die on the spot. Trembling, the poor queen loosed her hold on the golden hem of her royal robe, expecting to see the loaves tumble out and to feel the sword of Clovis at her throat, when lo ! a miracle occurred. Instead of the loaves, a shower of roses fell at the feet of the astonished king.

If we continue our southward way, we shall have to cross the Dordogne, and we must pause in the valley of that river to peep into the caves where, not very many years ago, a little girl made a most remarkable discovery. She was the first person in modern times to explore a dark cavern running deep into the steep cliff where there had been, thousands of years ago, the home of a family of prehistoric people. When the little girl related what she had seen in the cave, and how there were pictures of huge horned beasts painted in black and red and yellow on the walls, and the bones of beasts on the floor, excited grown-ups plunged into the side of the hill, and found that she had stumbled upon one of the most rich and complete examples of a prehistoric home, with tools and

Book of Other Lands

weapons and the ashes of ancient hearth-fires, that had yet been discovered.

Further south still, and steering a little toward the east, we reach the most romantic part of France, the land of Provence, the land of the Troubadours, the minstrels and poets of olden times. We meet all sorts of picturesque strangers in Provençal history—helmeted Romans, turbaned Saracens, and Frankish paladins with streaming golden beards. Across the valley of the river Gardon, not far from Avignon,



THE PONT DU GARD

the Romans threw a mighty bridge of many arches, the Pont du Gard. At Nîmes they built an open-air theatre, with terraced circles of stone seats. Bull-fights are still held there sometimes, but pads like boxing-gloves are used to muffle the bull's horns, and the aim of the toreador is to stick a little flag on the bull's head, not to stick a dart into its shoulder. The great palace of Avignon, which still looms large over the sleepy, sunny old town, was from 1308 to 1449 the home of the Popes, who before and after those dates had always their headquarters at the Vatican in Rome. Those were great days for Avignon. Cardinals came down the Rhône in crimson-draped barges to hold council with his Holiness. Weavers of cloth-of-gold flourished, and so did the weavers of purple silk. Deep-voiced bells clanged from



A PARDON IN BRITTANY

154

Often merely a *fête*, but in certain districts it retains its medieval character of a pilgrimage to a shrine

Noel Nisbet

France

all the belfries, and the townsfolk danced daily to the music of pipe and tabor.

The people of Provence were then, and are now, very different from the people in central and northern France. They are dark-complexioned and dark-eyed, showing traces of their Saracenic origins. They love music,

Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth.

They love colour, and deck their mules and their donkeys with scarlet pompoms and brass bells, and their wives and daughters with ribbons of many hues. Their language has still much in it of the ancient Troubadour speech, and even those who speak French speak it with a strong provençal accent that makes it difficult for people in other parts of France to understand them. Their land quivers and shimmers with almost perpetual sunlight ; it is gay with the tinkle of bells, and sweet with the scent of pine-needles, marjoram, thyme, and rosemary. The towns look like fairy-tale illustrations of places inhabited by wizards and enchanted princesses—towns of clustering spires and pillared terraces and arched bridges poised airily over deep yet narrow streams.

On the river Rhône, to the north of the ancient city of Arles, is a sunny little town called Tarascon, which is famous for more reasons than one. In days of old a fearsome monster called the Tarasque is said to have lived in the vicinity and preyed upon the people, who still hold a festival every year to celebrate their deliverance from their oppressor, of whom they parade a gruesome and gigantic image through the streets. And Tarascon was the home of one of the most comical figures in French literature—Alphonse Daudet's "Tartarin." This Tartarin was an ordinary, good-natured, easy-going, elderly man, inclined to be 'tubby,' and by no means cast in an heroic mould. But he believed—or *almost* believed—himself to be a perfectly terrific fellow. And somehow he contrived to make his friends share that belief and hold it almost more fervently than he. His dreams were of wild beasts and strange lands. His garden was full of outlandish plants, gourds, mangoes, cacti, palms, none of them more than a few

Book of Other Lands

feet in height. The walls of his house bristled with guns, swords, cutlasses, and sabres. When he strolled round to his club after dark, to have a chat or play a game of cards with one of his old cronies there, he would take a swordstick in his right hand, a bludgeon in his left, a revolver in one pocket, a cudgel in the other, and, hidden inside his waistcoat, a malay *kriss*. Sometimes he had to play the oddest tricks to conceal from his friends the fact that he was as little of a hero as any law-abiding Tarasconais could well be. But their faith in his amazing valour was unshaken. And when a



PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE IN THE DAUPHINY ALPS

travelling menagerie halted at Tarascon and Tartarin, boldly eyeing the lion (*through the bars*), muttered darkly that *that* was a beast *worth* hunting, the rumour flew round the town that the great, the fearless Tartarin had determined to go lion-shooting. Tartarin was modestly confident that he *could* shoot a lion, a dozen lions, any number of lions. Only—(and he was grateful in his heart of hearts that it should be so)—only there didn't happen to be any lions in that part of the world. What a pity that the Tarasque had disappeared so many hundreds of years before! But the enthusiastic Tarasconais were not to be so easily put off. Since there were no lions near at hand, why should not their hero go and look for them where they were more likely to be found? Everybody knows that lions abound in Africa. Let the great, the

France

heroic Tartarin pursue them to their native lairs! So poor Tartarin had to go, concealing his tremors with a fierce face, and staggering under the weight of his rifles and cartridges. When he reached Algiers he saw no lions about. But crawling on all fours after dusk, through a field of beetroots which he mistook for a patch of jungle, he saw a dark form vaguely looming ahead. And, of course, he wildly and hurriedly fired his rifle, only to find when dawn broke that he had killed an unfortunate donkey.

Weeks passed, and Tartarin did not reappear in Tarascon. His friends began to feel anxious. And then, one fine day, his especial friend, M. le Commandant Bravida, received a large parcel from Algiers. And in it was—a lion-skin! The worthy Commandant did not guess—how could he?—that the lion to whom the skin had once belonged, the lion shot in Algiers by Tartarin of Tarascon, was a poor, old, tame animal, led about the country by two natives, with a tray between its jaws in which to collect small coins! Of course, Tartarin would not have done anything so unsportsmanlike as to shoot a tame lion if he had known that it *was* tame. But he didn't know, at the time. And so a royal welcome awaited him at Tarascon when at last he returned. The good folk there never wearied of hearing him retell the tale of his adventures—a tale in whose truth he came to believe quite as firmly as they. And the reappearance of the Tarasque itself could not have caused more excitement in the streets of Tarascon than did the arrival of the devoted camel which followed Tartarin all the way from Algiers.

South-west of Tarascon lies Carcassonne, one of the most fantastic and romantic towns in the whole of France, with its encircling, battlemented walls, its proud towers, its forest of gables and spires and quaint pointed roofs. It would not give anybody the faintest sense of surprise to see a knight in chain-mail gallop forth from the frowning gateway, while a fairy-princess dangled her forty-foot-long golden locks from a turret on his right, and on his left an aged wizard in a peaked cap and a dragon-embroidered gown pelted him with scorpions and toads!

Book of Other Lands

According to the legend—another of those legends which contain a solid streak of fact—Carcassonne was once besieged by the Emperor Charlemagne and his paladins for many weary weeks and months—and *years*! The Saracens defending the town died off, a dozen at a time, as a result of famine or pestilence, or the arrows of the Franks, and *yet* the place held out. At last only one old Saracen woman remained alive within those stubborn walls, one old woman, the sole survivor of the garrison—and *yet* the place held out. For she was a stout-hearted old dame, this Saraceness. By running from tower to tower, shooting an arrow here, flinging a javelin there, she completely deceived Charlemagne, and made him think that there were still enough men alive to hold Carcassonne against him. At last, however, one of the towers collapsed—as an act of homage to the emperor, the paladins declared—and the besiegers poured through the gap, astonished to meet with no resistance, and even more astonished when they discovered that the defence of the town had been carried on unaided for many days by that undaunted old Saracen dame.

South of Carcassonne the Pyrenees roll away westward to the Pass of Roncesvalles, where Roland and Oliver perished in the rearguard of Charlemagne's army, and where is still to be seen the rock which Roland cleft with his sword Durandal; while to the east lie the gorgeous blue waters of the Mediterranean and the beautiful coasts of the Riviera. As you stand among the mimosa-groves and peer eastward over that lapis-lazuli sea you catch sight of a tiny speck—the rocky island of Corsica, where Napoleon was born, and where the daily life of the people is almost as simple and perilous now as it was in his time—a wild, craggy, shaggy island, where the red-capped shepherds go out to the pasture with an umbrella in one hand and a gun in the other. And you know, as you shade your eyes to see that tiny speck more clearly, that beyond, too far beyond for you to see, lie the shores of Italy.

CHAPTER VIII

ITALY

THERE was a time, many thousands of years since, when burning mountains were fairly common in northern Europe. Only their cold and hollow craters now remain to tell the tale; but those same scarred and scooped-out summits once gave forth torrents of white-hot lava and threw skyward vast clouds of red smoke. That was long, long ago. And now, in order to see a "real, live" volcano we must journey to the south-western extremity of Italy, on the ankle, just above the arched instep, of the 'foot' at the end of the 'leg' which that country resembles so closely on the map. Our best plan will be to make the journey by sea, and to approach Naples and Vesuvius from the west. Sea and sky are intensely, gloriously blue. To the left and right of our advancing ship lie the islands of Ischia and Capri. And almost exactly midway between the horns of Cape Miseno and Sorrento, one catches the first glimpse of

le géant noir qui fume sur l'horizon.

That "black giant," as the French poet Victor Hugo called him, is Vesuvius, one of the most famous and terrible volcanoes in the world. The ancient Greeks believed that the fiery smoke of these burning mountains came from the underground forge of Vulcan, the armourer of the gods; hence the name *volcano*. When the armourer was especially busy, he used his bellows with rather too much zeal, the flames leapt up, the core of the rock became molten, and what we should call an 'eruption' of Vesuvius, or Etna, or Stromboli, followed. Vesuvius is a great mass of tufa, pumice—that is to say, solidified lava—and caked ashes. Near the hollow, fuming summit sea-shells and fossils of sea-creatures have been found embedded in the very fabric of the mountain,

Book of Other Lands

thus proving that at one time, immeasurably long ago, it was underneath the sea.

East and west of Vesuvius lie the ruins of two ancient cities overwhelmed by its floods of seething lava some two thousand years ago—Herculaneum and Pompeii. A little further to the west, in the bay formed by the two jutting promontories of Torre del Greco and Torre Annunziata, lies Naples, the largest city in Italy, and one of the most beautifully situated in the world. Its ancient name of '*Parthenope*' proves that it was a Greek settlement in the dawn of history; but as long ago as 328 B.C. the Romans made it their own. The great beauty of its surroundings and the marvellous richness of the volcanic soil made this part of the coast a favourite pleasure resort of the people who dwelt in the noisy, busy imperial city 161 miles to the north. The wealthy Romans built themselves marble villas there, and on the isle of Capri, with its fantastic crags and weird grottoes, on the sister-isle of Ischia, with its warm springs and its vine-clad slopes, as well as at Baiæ, the modern Baja, in the Gulf of Pozzuoli. On the islet of Nisida, off Posilipo, Lucullus had a villa, and there Cassius and Brutus met, to talk over the disquieting events that followed upon the murder of Julius Cæsar. It is of this lovely stretch of sea-coast that Shelley—who knew it well—wrote in "The Ode to the West Wind":

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! . . .

Among the "old towers" now covered by the sapphire ripples of the Mediterranean must be the tomb of Virgil, the greatest as well as the sweetest of Roman poets. For many centuries pious lovers of poetry have stood awe-struck before the so-called 'tomb of Virgil,' in the grotto of Posilipo,



ST PETER'S AT ROME
Photo Donald McLeish



ROME FROM THE DOME OF ST PETER'S

Photo Donald McLeish

Italy

between Naples and Pozzuoli, but we now know that when the poet died, in the year 19 B.C., the place long pointed out as his sepulchre was more than two miles inland, and that the steady, though almost imperceptible, advance of the "crystalline streams" has swallowed up the earth to which his ashes were committed in the reign of Augustus Cæsar.

Other writers besides Shelley have delighted in the intense blue of the mountains that rise behind the white houses of Naples and the sea that shimmers before them. Those mountains have been compared to the purple-blue sheen on a pigeon's neck, and that sea to the purple and green and turquoise that enamel a peacock's plumage. But there are other tints not less lovely mingling with this riot of many blues—the greenish-gold of the clambering vines, the greenish-silver of the olives, the dusky, sombre green of the umbrella-shaped stone-pines so characteristic of southern Italy, and so dearly loved by Turner the artist.

For the last thirty or forty years wise people have been bestirring themselves to sweep away the narrow, ruinous, fever-haunted quarters of Naples, and replace them with fair terraces and open squares. Much has been done, but there remains much to do. And, alas, the more ramshackle these tottering old houses are, the more do artists enjoy painting them, especially on days when gaily-coloured garments, quilts, and curtains are swung out of the windows. It has been said that "Naples never goes to bed," and certainly its streets are in perpetual movement early and late. Trams clang and rattle, some driven by electricity, some drawn by horses; pedlars cry their wares, flower-girls and newsboys add their voices to the din, and over the cobbled roadway there is a continuous patter and jingle of heavily-laden mules and donkeys, and quaint, two-wheeled carts drawn sometimes by horses, sometimes by oxen, sometimes by a horse, an ox, and a donkey all loosely and clumsily harnessed together. Herds of goats and cows mingle with the traffic, only to be brought to a halt when a customer asks for some milk. Occasionally a nimble nanny-goat will be urged up the staircase of a high tenement house and milked on the threshold of the topmost room!

Book of Other Lands

Barefooted boys in baggy trousers hawk strings of silky light-brown onions with shrill cries ; dark-eyed girls with gold rings in their ears sell fruit from flat baskets which they poise on their heads. Perhaps the brass scales on which their wares are weighed may be slung over one shoulder. Another girl bears on her arm a hamper full of warm new loaves, each shaped like a small life-belt. The Neapolitan who wants to buy lemons, or green pepper-pods, or coppery-red carrots, need not go out and visit a greengrocer's shop—for the shop comes to his own door, in the form either of a laden barrow or a donkey with heavy panniers. Nor need he, if he lives on an upper story, descend to the street-level. A basket can be lowered on a string, and, when the lemon-monger has made sure that the coins in the basket are all right, he fills it with fruit, and before it has reached the top of the house, he has begun to sing his musical song again and to push his barrow or lead his donkey onward, in quest of another customer. Sometimes the barrow is quite a beautiful sight, with its pyramid of pale golden fruit decked with pale silver blossom and dark green leaves.

Here and there along the quay you will come across groups of fishermen and other typical Neapolitans amusing themselves in various ways. Some will be refreshing themselves with macaroni, tilting back their heads and lowering the soft, flexible white tubes into their open mouths without the aid of either fork or spoon ; others, reclining on the ground, will play the game of *Morra*, in which neither cards nor counters are needed, the aim being to guess quickly and correctly the numbers of fingers held up by each player in turn. Further on you may see an important-looking personage, perhaps wearing an old-fashioned, narrow-brimmed top-hat, reading aloud to an interested group of red-capped and bare-footed fishermen, none of whom can read for himself, and all of whom are filled with admiration for the great skill and profound learning of the reader. What is it that they are so eager to hear ? The news of the day ? Not always. Some up-to-date story, about wily detectives and resourceful crooks ? Never. It is usually poetry, the poetry of a countryman of theirs, Torquato Tasso by name, who was born at Sorrento in

Italy

1544, and sang, in his great epic *Jerusalem Delivered*, of the triumph of Christ over Mohammed in the First Crusade. The Neapolitan loves poetry. (Your cabman, your hairdresser, your baker, will all be familiar with the rolling cadences of *Jerusalem Delivered*.) And he loves music. He plays the guitar, sometimes badly, sometimes well. He sings plaintive, haunting little songs that seem to have been born of the very sea and soil of this glorious bay. When there is a popular festival, the thrum of the guitars and the notes of the rich Italian voices are mingled with the tap of dancing feet and the faint clashing of tambourines.

There is much to be seen in Naples besides the many-coloured flood of vivid life that flows through her streets. There are beautiful churches, some of them bearing traces of Spanish influence, and reminding us of the fact that the House of Aragon ruled for many years over this lovely corner of Italy. Some of the monuments in the Neapolitan churches belong to the podgy and pompous period, when people used to be sculptured wearing curly wigs and Roman armour—a very queer idea, and not at all impressive now. In the cathedral of St Januarius, built on the site of a pagan temple dedicated to Neptune and Apollo, there is preserved a relic very precious in the eyes of all pious Neapolitans. This is not the head of the saint, though that, too, is kept there in a silver shrine, but two flasks believed to contain some drops of the saint's blood. St Januarius was Bishop of Benevento, and was beheaded at Pozzuoli during the imperial persecution of the Christians in the year 305, after the wild beasts in the arena had refused to devour him, and the flames of a furnace had failed to do him any harm. In the reign of the Christian Emperor Constantine, another sainted bishop, St Severo, transported the relics of Januarius to Naples, among them the two flasks in which a Christian matron of Pozzuoli had collected some of his blood. It was then, according to the legend, that the blood suddenly melted and became fluid in the hands of the bishop. Ever since pious folk have waited anxiously every year for the miracle to occur again. To this day the cathedral at Naples is thronged, on the 19th of September, the 16th of December,

Book of Other Lands

and the first Sunday in May, with eager worshippers, who, when the priest holds up the sacred flasks and announces that the blood has liquefied, cry aloud for joy, and pass the glad news to the crowd outside ; then the air is full of excited exclamations of "*È fatto il miracolo*"—the miracle has occurred ! If the blood melts quickly it is accepted as a sign that the patron saint of Naples is well pleased with his city ; if slowly, that he is wroth ; while if it fails to melt altogether, there is universal consternation, and a catastrophe is expected at any moment.

Modern Naples is a comely city, rich in fountains, statues, and large buildings, such as the theatre of San Carlo, the National Museum, and the State Library. Some of the most famous works of art in the world are gathered together in this museum, including the Farnese Hercules, with his bulging muscles, his curly beard, and his dangling lion's skin. Here, too, is the statue of Agrippina Minor, the mother of the Emperor Nero, seated in a marble chair and looking anxious and sorrowful, as well she might, with such a son ! At one time most of the marvellous objects dug up at Herculaneum and Pompeii used to find a home at Naples, and it is there that you must seek the wonderful bronze and marble images, the glowing wall-paintings, and the little familiar things—frying-pans, hair-pins, ointment-bowls, spoons, lamps, and signet-rings—which were retrieved from the wilderness of lava during the earlier stages of the work of excavation. That work is still going on, and will not be finished for many a year to come ; but now, instead of carting all the treasure-trove to Naples, the excavators try, as far as possible, to leave the bronze and marble household belongings in the actual houses where they were found. Of course, owing to the fierce heat of the molten lava which overwhelmed Pompeii in the year A.D. 79, nothing—or almost nothing—made of wood has survived.

Six hundred years before the birth of Christ there was a little town where the ruins of Pompeii now stand, a town inhabited by a primitive Italic race who recked nothing of Latium, or of the power which was so soon to grow up in Rome, more than a

Italy

hundred and fifty miles farther south. But the coast was too fair and the soil was too fertile to escape the attention of the practical and enterprising Romans, and by the year 80 B.C. they had got a firm grip upon the place, and had suppressed the last descendants of its earlier citizens. Then for a hundred and sixty years Pompeii was the natural—and favourite—pleasure resort of the Romans. It became a frivolous town of many amusements, with open-air theatres, luxurious public baths, and gaily-hued stucco villas. The streets were paved with large blocks of lava, on which you may still see the ruts left by waggon-wheels and the hoof-marks of beasts of burden. In the year A.D. 63 a violent earthquake overthrew the marble temples that had been built by the earlier Greek inhabitants, and laid many beautiful marble houses low. Instead of taking the hint and moving to a less dangerous spot, the light-hearted Pompeians proceeded to build new temples and new houses, but of brick, rubble, and plaster this time, instead of marble. The “black giant” on the horizon had then a much wider crater, a huge hollow instead of a narrowing cone; but he was such a familiar sight that nobody paid much attention to him until one day in the year A.D. 79, when a vast column of swarthy smoke rose from the summit and spread wider and wider until the sun was blotted out and a ghastly gloom fell upon the blithe city and the beautiful countryside. Presently this cloud was cleft asunder, and a blinding torrent of ashes, pumice, and red-hot stones descended upon Pompeii, its force increased by streams of hot rain. All who *could* fly fled the scene. But many were overwhelmed in the streets, in their houses, or in the cellars where they had sought refuge. Darkness reigned for four days. When the worst was over, unscrupulous fugitives returned, and plundered the ruined city. Half-hearted attempts to rebuild it were quickly abandoned, and the once gay and wicked place was left desolate, in its deep shroud of ashes. Centuries passed, and the memory of what had been seemed to have faded utterly. Grass and wild-flowers grew over the mounds of hardened lava. The later eruptions of Vesuvius, in 472 and 512, though the wind bore the flying ashes as far afield as Constantinople and

Book of Other Lands

Tripoli, left the hidden ruins of Pompeii undisturbed. At last, in 1592, an Italian engineer called Fontana, in the course of cutting an aqueduct, uncovered some of the ancient buildings. The task of excavating and exploring was not undertaken with anything like thoroughness till toward the end of the eighteenth century, and since then it has proceeded, with a few interruptions, till our own time. And still Pompeii has not yielded up all her treasures, and still the spade of the excavator brings new wonders to light. The traveller who spends even a few days at Naples will not willingly go his way without having had at least one glimpse of the ancient Græco-Roman town. He will enter the villas of the long-dead Pompeians, and their gardens, where the fountains now play again ; he will see the walls of their rooms, painted with scenes from Greek and Roman poetry, with landscapes, and birds, and with quaint pictures such as winged cupids gathering grapes, or riding upon giant shrimps. Perhaps the quaintest of all is the one where two Pompeian ladies are seen, *buying* little cupids, as one might buy love-birds or tame mice, from an old woman who has one in a cage, and holds up another by his wings, while yet another leans against the knee of one of the customers !

We know almost as much about the daily life of Pompeii as if we ourselves had dwelt there. We can see the baker's shops, with their brick ovens and their stone hand-mills for grinding corn, the wine-merchant's, with their rows of sealed jars, the fuller's and dyer's, with their vats for colour and chemicals. We can go into the house of a surgeon, where his bronze surgical instruments were found uninjured, and into a sculptor's studio, where his tools were left lying round a half-hewn block of marble when the stream of boiling lava overwhelmed him. In the barracks where the gladiators lived helmets and tridents, such as they used in the arena, were unearthed, and a set of stocks in which unruly members of the profession were confined as a punishment. The baths still stand, with their elaborate hot-water conduits and their lockers for the clothes of the bathers. Round the Frigidarium, or cold plunge-bath, of the Terme del Foro runs a spirited frieze of red-and-white

Italy

stucco, representing a race, while the lower wall is painted with flowering rushes and flitting birds. The painted stucco walls of the Pompeian villas were a great temptation to idle passers-by to pause and scratch a rough picture or a few hasty words upon the surface. Schoolboys inscribed morsels of Greek grammar, frequenters of the race-course and the circus recorded the names of horses they had 'backed,' or of favourite gladiators. More cultured scribblers added verses from Ovid; humorists could not resist the impulse to trace caricatures—and so we see a profile of a certain Peregrinus with a perfectly enormous nose, and another victim, called Naso, with scarcely any nose at all.

The modern Italian, like the ancient Pompeian, is a vivid and romantically-minded creature, but he is also industrious, a skilful craftsman, and careful of his *soldi* (pennies). There are great differences in dress and in character between the dwellers in northern and in southern Italy, and this is easily understood when we remember that less than a hundred years ago the country we now call 'Italy' was a group of separate states, each managing its own affairs, just as in the olden days, when the rivalries and feuds between the rulers of those states made life eventful, perilous, and exciting for everybody concerned.

The market of a typical Italian town is a fascinating place in which to linger. The stalls are shaded by vast umbrellas or white awnings, and there the market-women sit, with pieces of crochet or knitting in their never-resting hands, and baskets full of various tempting wares at their feet. As very little meat is eaten by the poorer classes in Italy, the greengrocer is an important person. More often it is a 'greengroceress'! Besides cauliflowers, cabbages, and the vegetables most familiar in other European countries, he—or she—sells bright green and bright red pods full of pepper, persimmon-fruit like balls of burnished gold, and the odd-looking, deep-purple fruit of the egg-plant. In the spring, when those queer creatures whom the Italians call '*forestieri*' (foreigners; literally, dwellers in forests) descend upon Italy in their thousands, the flower-markets become very animated, and the street-sellers

Book of Other Lands

fill their baskets with roses and anemones, violets and mimosa. Like most members of the Latin race-group, the Italian peasants have sometimes a hankering affection for artificial flowers, with leaves and blossoms of tinsel and paper. The gilt decorations upon the altars of the little country churches delight the eyes of the simple folk who kneel there, and they



PEASANT GIRL OF STRONA VALLEY

One of the few Italian valleys where the natives still retain their ancient costumes and customs.

would feel chilled and discouraged if those childishly gay masses of cheap colour and imitation gold were lacking. On Palm Sunday the children are given sprays of 'golden' olive, upon which perch little doves modelled in wax. And when the painted images of the Madonna and of favourite saints are borne in procession through the streets there is always plenty gilt upon their haloes and diadems, and on the canopies borne over their heads.

The dress of an Italian peasant girl is not only pretty in itself, but harmonizes with the background against which she moves, the intense blue distances, the houses with dark, ruddy-brown roofs and plastered walls, saffron yellow, pale pink, or warm red, the dangling, shaggy vines with their delicate green tassels, the soaring, blue-black cypresses and dusky stone-pines, and the narrow, cobbled streets in which a row of stone or brick-work arches often joins the houses on either side to each other, like a series of land-bridges, and seems to keep them from tumbling down. She is industrious, the *contadina* (peasant-woman). She knits her own white stockings, spins the linen for her own loose, wide-sleeved blouse, and embroiders in bright patterns both her apron and her skirt. Though her shoes are wide slippers without any heels, she

Italy

neither stumbles nor shuffles when she walks. Over her smoothly-braided dark hair she will wear either a white kerchief or a small coloured and patterned shawl; and she would be a very unhappy contadina who did not possess a necklace of garnets, amber, or coral. The men in the centre and north of Italy, especially those living in towns, seem to have a liking for black suits, worn without waistcoats over collarless shirts, and for black felt hats rather like those which clergymen wear in England and America. The priests in Roman Catholic countries usually wear hats of a different kind, often with very broad brims, sometimes turned up at either side, sometimes adorned with a cord and tassels, and always made of black felt with a fluffy, 'fuzzy' surface.



PILLOW-LACE WORKER AT BURANO,
NEAR VENICE

Among the stone-pines, oaks, and beeches which grow so luxuriantly in most parts of Italy, there are many noble chestnut-trees whose nuts are very good to eat. The Italians love those glossy, plump nuts, and eat them in various ways—sometimes roasted, sometimes mashed into a kind of sticky cake, sometimes boiled with aromatic herbs. Pears and apples they like best baked and then soaked in warm red wine. Indeed, this red wine plays a great part in the lives of the people, for tea is almost unknown, coffee is expensive, and pure drinking-water hard to come by, especially in the towns. Thanks to the luxuriance with which grape-vines flourish on the volcanic soil of the south, even the poorest Italian can afford to drink a mild sort of red wine, which is not strong

Book of Other Lands

enough to do him any harm unless he quaffs it very freely indeed. The kitchen of an Italian country house is a picturesque and interesting sight. From the rafters dangle bunches of dried herbs. Besides the open wood-fire there may be quite a regiment of small stoves (*fornelli*) heated by charcoal; and on each one of these a saucepan may be bubbling merrily at the same moment. Their cosy sounds may be mingled with the loud crowing of a cock, who is spending the last weeks of



A BOY OF ROME

his career (only, luckily for him, he does not guess that they are to be the last) in a large wooden cage, where he is being fed and fattened for the table. Many Italians think English and American cookery tasteless and unexciting when they compare it with their own. Olive oil, garlic, grated Parmesan cheese, tomatoes and macaroni play a large part in the preparation of typical Italian dishes. *Risotto*, made with rice, butter, grated cheese, and chicken or veal, and

polenta, made with Indian corn, onions, parsley, tomatoes, and Bologna sausage, represent two ideas so intensely Italian that their very memory will give keen twinges of home-sickness to an exile from Italy.

We have seen that in the Middle Ages this enchanting land was divided into many petty states, each with its own prince, each vying with its neighbours in valour and magnificence and pride. It is owing to this historical fact that the whole of Italy is studded with quaint, walled towns, bristling with towers and castles, and haunted by the memory of the wise and gorgeous princelings to whose courts great painters and poets seemed instinctively to find their way. It would be very pleasant to visit each of their strongholds in turn,

Italy

Ferrara, Urbino, Mantua, and the rest ; but the traveller who had to choose between the four most interesting *big* towns and *all* the interesting *little* ones would probably—and not unwisely—choose the ‘ Big Four ’—Rome, Naples, Venice, and Florence. And now we come to Rome, the most famous city in the history of the world. If we disdain the aid of the railway, we may enter Rome from the south, as the Apostles Peter and Paul did, along the Appian Way. This great high-road, which ran from Brundisium to the heart of the Roman Empire, was begun in the year 313 B.C., by the blind decemvir Appius Cæcus. According to a very wise Roman law, the dead had to be laid to rest *outside* the walls of any city. Therefore upon the verge of every Roman settlement of any size or importance, including London, there was a Street of Tombs. It now becomes clear why the Appian Way is flanked on either side by ancient grave-stones and monuments. Most of these are in the form of altars, and many bear inscriptions that can still be read ; but others, such as the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the wife of Crassus (68 B.C.), are more like towers or small strongholds of brick, mostly circular. On your right hand loom the massive ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, an emperor who set cleanliness high above godliness and had, indeed, no trace of any other virtue. The turf among the tombs is starred with wild-flowers, and high above them rise the slender, dark-tufted stone-pines. Across the ancient stones laid so well by the masons of Appius Cæcus hooded carts rattle, and mules and donkeys tinkle and plod, and swift motor-cars dash toward the place where once stood the Eastern Gate of Rome—that gate of which Macaulay speaks in one of the most famous of his *Lays*.

At the foot of the Capitoline Hill there stood, “ in the most high and palmy state of Rome,” a golden milestone. The place where it stood was then believed to be the exact centre of the world. And so, in one sense, it was, since the distance to all the far-flung provinces of the Roman Empire was measured from that point. That same hill, the site of the splendid temple of Capitoline Jove, was really the Tarpeian Rock, though that name, of gruesome memory, came to be

Book of Other Lands

attached more especially to that part of its steeply-escarped flank whence criminals used to be hurled to their death at the base eighty feet below. It was from the summit that the "wan burghers" watched the approach of Lars Porsena of Clusium, as Macaulay has recorded in the most stirring of all his *Lays of Ancient Rome*. And

With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

The bridge that Horatius kept so well was called the Pons Sublicius, the wooden bridge, and it was the first ever flung across the yellow foam of Father Tiber. The builder was Ancus Martius, the fourth king of Rome. Of course, if it had been made of stone, Macaulay could not have told how the City Fathers

Seized hatchet, bar and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

South-east of the Tarpeian Rock, on the Palatine Hill, you may see some fragments of stone-work, unearthed not long since, which were already old when Ancus Martius built his bridge of wood and bronze. These fragments formed part of the wall raised by the founders of Rome somewhere about the year 754 B.C. Indeed, one of them may have been the very bit of wall over which Remus jumped, to the great annoyance of Romulus his brother! Every one has heard the legend of the twins, Romulus and Remus, grandsons of the king of Alba, who, at the orders of their cruel great-uncle Amulius, were cast into the Tiber. But the wise river washed the babies gently ashore, and, like Mowgli in the *Jungle Books*, they were cared for by a friendly she-wolf. This part of the ancient story sounds uncommonly like a fairy-tale, and learned people used to declare that it was one of the many fables woven by primitive man about the sun—a solar myth. But now it seems as if our old friend Romulus were a 'real, live' hero after all. The first settlers on the Palatine Hill were almost

Italy

certainly fugitives from the Alban Hills, fleeing from a volcanic upheaval. Gradually their settlement, a cluster of huts at the beginning and then a little town with streets and walls, spread from one to another of the Seven Hills¹ until all seven were linked into one great city, that marvellous city of Rome which has been the centre of the greatest worldly might and the greatest spiritual force in the history of the West.

The Gauls of Brennus set fire to Rome in the year 390 B.C. ; it was sacked by the fierce Visigoths eight centuries later, and in 1527 a rabble of Spanish and German hirelings stormed and plundered it. Yet even now, when it is a glaring, clattering modern capital, with hooting taxi-cabs and motor-buses, and glittering cinemas, no one could walk long unthrilled through the streets of Rome. For the city of the Cæsars is beneath your feet, and the city of the Popes still towers against the deep blue of the Roman sky. Little now remains visible of the Rome that the first and greatest of the Cæsars knew, but his is the memory that stands foremost in our mind when we set out to explore pre-Christian Rome. We shall see only the site of his house, of the temple where he served as the *Flamen Dialis* the high priest of Jove, of Pompey's Curia where he was treacherously done to death, of the temple of Castor and Pollux outside whose portal was piled his funeral pyre of purple and gold ; but with the mind's eye we shall see much more. How oddly historians disagree about the character of Julius Cæsar ! Some have even been known to prefer Brutus, his murderer. Mr H. G. Wells is a little less than just to him. Perhaps Mr Marion Crawford swings too far to the other side. " Of all great conquerors," he exclaims, enthusiastically, " he was the least cruel . . . of all great law-givers, he was the most wise and just. . . . He is the one great man of all without whom it is impossible to imagine history. We cannot take him away and yet leave anything of what we have."

Julius Cæsar, it will be remembered, bequeathed to the people of Rome his orchards " on both sides Tiber." Very

¹ The Palatine, Capitoline, Aventine, and Esquiline Hills, Mount Janiculum, Mount Cœlis, and Mount Quirinalis.

Book of Other Lands

different were the proceedings of Nero, who "built himself a lordly pleasure-house" which usurped the whole Palatine Hill, and whose gardens covered the whole plain south of the Forum, the temple-girt market-place of Rome, and stretched as far as the Esquiline and Coelian Hills. This house was known as the 'Golden House,' and with good reason, for the pillars in its mile-long galleries were cased in gold, it contained a golden statue of the crack-brained emperor 120 feet high, and its banqueting-hall roof was adorned with golden images of the planets, which revolved by machinery, and from which showers of perfume descended on the revellers below. Patient excavators have unearthed some portions of the foundations of this huge, fantastic palace; but more interesting is the spot where, in the gardens of the Golden House, Nero had made the largest of several artificial lakes. After his death the lake was drained, and the Emperor Vespasian began to build there the famous amphitheatre which the Emperor Titus completed and which is known as the Colosseum. The Roman populace dearly loved shows, and circuses, and all sorts of pageants, and their loudest cry was always for "*Panem et circenses*" (bread and circuses). There were various arenas in Rome where chariot-races and wild-beast fights were held, but none has survived in such a complete condition as the Colosseum, and none is so celebrated. For it was in the centre of those slopes of stone benches, under the purple awnings stretched to keep the glare of the southern sun from the heads of the eager multitude, that so many early Christians endured death rather than deny Christ. There, slain by wild beasts, died St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; he who, according to ancient tradition, was the very child whom Christ had set in the midst of the disciples—though it is difficult to see how this *could* be so, unless the saint lived to a tremendous old age; there, too, perished St Martina and St Prisca, in the flower of their youth; St Justus, despite the fact that he was a Roman Senator, and sixty Christian legionaries of the army of Claudius II. No less than fifty thousand spectators witnessed and enjoyed these gruesome scenes. Now you

Italy

can still see the underground pipes by which the arena could be flooded with water when a mock sea-fight formed part of the performance, and the dens where the fierce beasts were kept.

The Forum, once the centre of the life of Rome, looks now like a clearing in some petrified forest, studded with the stumps of trees, with here and there a few that still stand, and that have clusters of carven acanthus leaves upon their summits. Three of these that are joined together by a stone pediment once belonged to the temple of "the great twin brethren," Castor and Pollux. One, standing alone, was set up by a cruel emperor called Phocas, who began his career as a centurion, and, after murdering the Emperor Maurice and his five sons, found himself Cæsar. Less fortunate was the temple of the Vestal Virgins, who kept the sacred fire burning night and day, and of which only the bases of the pillars and patches of the pavement remain. Age after age has swept away, and renewed, and blotted out in turn the glories of the Forum. There stood the temple of Janus, which was kept open only in time of war; the Basilica Julia, beautified by Julius Cæsar, of which now few and battered traces remain; the temple of Concord, raised by Camillus, the conqueror of the invading Gauls, and repaired by Opimius, the arch-foe of the Gracchi. Venus, the patroness of the Julian race, had her temple, too, and Jupiter (Jove) had his, on the Capitoline Hill above. Saturn, too, the father of Jupiter (whom some students have boldly identified with Noah in the Bible!), had a noble fane at the foot of the same hill, where slaves who had been set at liberty used to hang their fetters, and of which some columns still remain erect. Emperors of later days—Titus, Septimius Severus, Vespasian—fell into the habit of erecting large arches in order to commemorate the triumphs of Rome in distant lands, arches that served no other purpose, and of which the survivors now stand about in a rather heavy, helpless way. But Trajan, the Spanish-born Cæsar, chose instead to erect a lofty marble column, surmounted by a statue of himself, and carved all round the shaft with a winding procession of 2500 figures

Book of Other Lands

illustrating his victories. There you see Roman legions marching, embarking in high-prowed galleys upon "perilous seas forlorn," digging trenches, charging on horseback, fighting, too, in the 'tortoise' formation, with their shields overlapping and interlocked, and Trajan himself urging them on, or meting out justice, or concluding peace with the subjugated peoples. Inside the column a staircase of 185 steps leads to the summit where now, instead of a statue of Trajan, there stands one of St Peter. It is most interesting to see how the Fisherman Saint, and all that he represented, gradually drove out the lingering forces of paganism, and changed the whole course of Western history. Vipsanius Agrippa, son-in-law of Augustus, had raised a temple called the Pantheon, to *all* the gods—a prudent plan, in the days when gods were believed to be so numerous. *All* the gods together could not protect the temple from a stroke of lightning which cleft the roof asunder in the reign of Hadrian, who repaired the damage. Finally, it was made into a Christian church by Pope Boniface IV (A.D. 608–615), who dedicated it to all saints, and gathered together within its already ancient walls the dust of the early Christian martyrs which till then had reposed in the Catacombs. These Catacombs, hewn out of rock or tunnelled in the earth, are said to have been made originally by the Jewish inhabitants of Rome, whose religion bade them bury their dead, while the Roman religion ordained that the dead should be burned. These dim galleries, with their seemingly endless rows of hollow niches and shelves arranged one above the other, like bunks in a ship's cabin, are among the most impressive sights in Rome to-day. The names of the early Christians, here laid to rest in secrecy during the days of persecution and peril, were sometimes inscribed in red or black characters upon marble slabs, or else painted upon a film of cement over brick. There are pictures, too, on the walls, some mere scratched outlines, others filled in with gold now faded and colours now grown faint. Many of these are what are called '*Orantes*,' figures of people in the act of prayer, and it is from them that we know that the early Christians of Rome prayed not kneeling with folded

Italy

hands but standing with both arms raised. The inscriptions are brief, simple, and touching. "Artemidorus is in peace," says one; "Sophronia, mayest thou live for ever in God," says another; and another, "Farewell, farewell, best-beloved!"

After Rome had become the centre of Western Christendom and the seat of the Papacy, Christian churches of great beauty multiplied upon the spot where pagan gods had once triumphed. The most skilful architects, the most divinely-gifted painters, were happy to spend the best part of their lives labouring to beautify the Eternal City. The greatest and the most famous of these churches is St Peter's, the vast building designed by Bramante and begun in 1506 at the orders of the fiery, masterful Pope Julius II. There was already an ancient church on the spot, which earlier yet had been part of the Esquiline Hill, and by no means a pleasant or holy place, for the bodies of crucified criminals were buried there in rude pits. Later, Macænas, the wealthy Roman, friend and patron of the poets Horace and Virgil, bought the land, heaped thirty feet of clean earth over the shallow graves, and planted shrubberies there, and quiet shady walks. Later again, Nero made a circus there, where hundreds of Christians were flung to the beasts. It was in his reign that, according to tradition, St Peter was crucified on the slope of Mount Janiculum. After nightfall, when Nero's executioners and sentinels had departed, a small group of weeping Christians took the Fisherman Saint's body from the cross, on which it had been nailed head-downward (at his own request, for he said he was unworthy to suffer as his Lord had suffered), and took it and buried it in a certain spot against the wall of Nero's circus. It was the spot where they were wont to lay the mangled remains of the martyrs who had perished in the arena. Forty years later a bishop called Anacletus built a tiny chapel over St Peter's grave. But it was not until the year 326, after many vicissitudes, that Constantine's larger church was consecrated on that spot by Pope Sylvester, nor until near the close of the fourth century that the body of the saint was laid in a brazen sarcophagus in the crypt where it still lies.

Book of Other Lands

When Julius II determined to build a vast and glorious church in honour of him who, according to very ancient testimony, was the first Bishop of Rome, he swept away Constantine's buildings almost ruthlessly. Many years passed before his work was completed, and he did not live to see the end ; but *we* can see the fulfilment of his stupendous idea in this great basilica, three times larger than Notre Dame at Paris, surmounted by a dome four hundred feet in height. Everything in St Peter's is on a vast scale—statues, pictures, columns, and arches. It is often full of lovely music, the chanting of the purple-clad papal choir. Pious pilgrims, looking no bigger than ants, move softly from one shining side-chapel to another. There may be seven or eight hundred people gathered together under those enormous arches, and yet the church will seem almost deserted. But at other times it is filled to overflowing. During 1925, the year of the papal Jubilee, it is said that no less than one and a quarter million pilgrims wended their way thither, some of them covering hundreds of miles on foot. This is the largest number recorded since Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first Jubilee in 1360.

On certain solemn and memorable occasions the faithful are vouchsafed a glimpse of his Holiness, of the *Servus servorum Dei*, the servant of the servants of God. Then, clad in a pure white cassock and crowned with the triple tiara wherein gleam the jewels once worn by a fourth-century Roman empress, he is borne through St Peter's in a golden chair, high above the heads of the kneeling people, to whom he gives his apostolical benediction as he passes by. On either side of his chair are carried plummy, semicircular fans on lofty, slender sticks, much like those once waved by dusky slaves around the throne of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

The Noble Guard, whose duty it is to attend the Pope upon occasions of ceremony, or when he goes for a drive in the Vatican grounds, wear a most picturesque uniform, unaltered since the days of Michaelangelo, who designed it. The Swiss Guard, armed with tasselled halberds and glittering breast-plates and clad in yellow, black, and red, are only one degree less impressive. On St Peter's Day every year gorgeous

Italy

ceremonies are held, and sumptuous robes are placed upon the bronze statue of the saint which has sat there, with one hand upraised in benediction, for more than fifteen centuries. This is the statue whose big toe has almost been rubbed away by the kisses of the pilgrims.

North and west of St Peter's lies the Vatican, the official residence of the Pope, and the extensive gardens beyond which no pontiff has advanced since the cleavage between Church and State at the end of the Italian war of liberation more than sixty years ago. A matchless collection of works of art has slowly been gathered together in the papal palace. Here you will find the masterpieces of two of the greatest artists that ever lived, Michaelangelo and Raphael, painted on the walls, far larger than life-size. Michaelangelo painted the "Creation" and the "Last Judgment," overwhelming pictures which give us a sense of awe rather than of delight. Raphael's frescoes are more numerous, more reposeful, softer in colour, gentler in form. It is in the Vatican that you may see the famous "Transfiguration" which he left unfinished at his early death (in 1520), and which his friends set at the head of his coffin when his body lay in state. Among the statues in the Vatican collection are the familiar, half-smiling Apollo Belvedere, a very pretty fellow with a rather girlish face, and the hapless Laocöon, struggling with a huge serpent, while his two sons, also caught in the toils, look on with a curiously theatrical air of dismay. This statue, hewn out of a single block of marble, was discovered on the Esquiline in 1506.

Rome is rich in beautiful fountains, adorned with lovely groups of sculpture. One of these, the Fontana Trevi, is supposed to have the magical power of drawing back to Rome every one who drinks of its rippling waters by moonlight and flings a coin far out into the centre of the basin. Few people who have learnt to love the Eternal City, and to delight in its inexhaustible wonders, will forget to observe this quaint little ceremony before they depart.

Like the Thames and the Seine, the Tiber follows an exceedingly zigzag course, and if you keep to the line of the river in a north-easterly direction from Rome, tracking it to its

Book of Other Lands

source in the Tuscan Apennines, you will pass between a little town to which thousands of people wend for the love of one long-dead saint, the town of Assisi, and a large lake, on whose banks a fierce battle took place in the year 217 B.C. between Hannibal the Carthaginian and the Roman Flaminius—the Lake Thrasymentus, Macaulay's "reedy Thrasymene." In the picturesque little town of Assisi, which lies to the east of this lake, there was born in the year 1182 one of the best-loved of all saints, the ardent and yet gentle St Francis. It may have been because he poured forth love upon all created things that he himself was so well loved in life and in death. Pity was an almost fierce passion with St Francis, pity which made him kiss the scarred face of a leper, or the bruised feet of a beggar on the dusty road. And his other consuming passion was love. In his eyes all God's creatures were brothers. So he spoke of his brother the ass. And he also spoke of his brother the sun. The little green lizards darting through the flowery turf and the stars burning in the high vault of heaven were members with himself of one great family, and he had love in his heart for both. He preached, like St Pol of Brittany, to the little birds. Little fishes, too, were said to swim near the bank to hear his voice. It is for love of him that hundreds of travellers still climb the steep hill to Assisi every year, seven centuries after his death. Francis went as far afield as Egypt, where he preached before the Sultan and his paynim court; but his birth and the chief events of his life occurred in the town which he has made famous, this little Umbrian town built of wonderful, faintly-tinted stone, rose and blue and silver-white, on a flank of "purple Apennine," embowered in maple and mulberry, chestnut and olive, above the ilex-wooded valley watered by the Tescio, a tributary of the Tiber. There he renounced worldly riches in favour of Holy Poverty; there he gathered round him the faithful followers who were the first Franciscans, members of the order of St Francis; there he died and was laid to rest, and there, in 1253, forty-seven years after his death, Pope Innocent IV dedicated to his memory the great double-church, the upper and the lower, which are the glory

Italy

of Assisi to this day. In the upper church is a series of beautiful frescoes by Giotto, one of the earliest of the great Florentine painters, illustrating the life of the saint.

Giotto's own life was like a fairy-tale, for he was born of very humble parents, and sent out as a child to tend sheep on the hillside near Florence. He soon began to try to make pictures of the sheep he tended, and one day, as he was tracing an outline on a flat stone, a passer-by paused to watch him, and was amazed at his natural skill. That passer-by happened to be the painter Cimabue. He took the shepherd-boy with him to Florence, taught him all he knew, and lived to see him far outstrip his teacher. Giotto was not only a painter. He was an architect of great skill. To him we owe one of the loveliest towers in the world, the slim, delicate, soaring belfry of the cathedral of St Mary of the Flowers at Florence. There is a wonderful description of the beautiful city and the beautiful tower in a poem of Robert Browning's, where he tells how he

. . . leaned and looked over the aloof arch
Of the villa-gate, this warm March day . . .

and gazed on

. . . the valley beneath where, white and wide
And washed by the morning's water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain side.

River and bridge and street and square
Lay mine, as much at my beck and call,
Through the live translucent bath of air,
As the sights in a magic crystal ball.
And of all I saw and of all I praised,
The most to praise and the best to see,
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised.

That "startling bell-tower" has been compared to a lofty lily, and the emblem of Florence is a lily, but a red and not a white one. The city's own name means flowery, or full of flowers, and the very earth of the Arno valley seems to have a magical quality—it has brought forth not only a wealth of flowers, but a whole procession of great men, painters, sculptors, architects, thinkers, poets, merchant-venturers, explorers, and saints. This lovely city, among the pine-clad Apennines of

Book of Other Lands

Tuscany, was one of the centres of the great movement known as the Renaissance, the rebirth of Greek culture in Europe. There, in cypress-shaded gardens, among fountains and statues, the Florentines read aloud the works of Greek philosophers and poets, forgotten for a thousand years, while in the palaces of the Florentine nobles and the many beautiful churches of the city painters and sculptors like the wistful Botticelli, the mighty Michaelangelo, the gentle Donatello, the 'superman' Leonardo da Vinci, wrought masterpieces that enchant and amaze us to this day.

But Florence was a city of poets and painters before the dawn of the Renaissance. It was there that Fra Angelico painted his stiff, brightly-hued saints, his slender angels blowing long golden trumpets against backgrounds of pure gold. Giotto himself was born near Florence, Cimabue, his patron and teacher, within the city-walls. Dante, one of the greatest poets in the world's history, the gaunt, dark-browed, brooding Dante whose face is familiar to many who have never read a line of his tremendous poems describing heaven and hell, was another Florentine, as was also Boccaccio, prince of storytellers, from whom Chaucer borrowed the *Knight's Tale* and the tale of patient Griselda, and Keats, *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, and Tennyson, the plot of *The Falcon* and of *The Lover's Tale*. Amerigo Vespucci, the godfather if not the actual discoverer of America, was yet another notable son of Florence, and Galileo, he whose insistence that the world revolved round the sun and not the sun round the world brought down upon his head the wrath of powerful people who did not like the idea, though he was born in the neighbouring city of Pisa, spent much of his life in Florence, where he was visited by John Milton, and where he died, blind but indomitable, in 1642. The English poet loved Florence, and never forgot her. As recently as 1925 a tablet was placed to his memory in the monastery where he used to stay at Vallombrosa, not far away, that valley of which he wrote one of the most frequently-quoted phrases in English poetry,

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa.

Italy

Excessively clever people have been heard to protest that as practically all the trees there are pine-trees, they shed *needles* and do not strew *leaves*, and that therefore Milton made a mistake. But it would appear that in the seventeenth century there were many chestnuts and beeches in Vallombrosa, and that it was of their deep russet and delicate golden leaves that the poet was thinking when he wrote the three hundred and second line of the first book of *Paradise Lost*.

Across the Arno at Florence curves one of the quaintest bridges in the world, the Ponte Vecchio, the Old Bridge. It is very old indeed, dating from 1302, and, as Old London Bridge used to be, it is covered with houses and shops. Practically all the shops are kept by jewellers, as they were in the days when the dark-browed Medici were lords of Florence, when Michaelangelo, with his sad face and his unlucky broken nose, or Leonardo, tall, splendid, with a beard like the beard of a prophet and a cloak like the cloak of a king, might be among the jostling throng between the jutting houses. Crossing the Ponte Vecchio from west to east, you reach the cathedral, with its noble dome, rose-red beside the pearly whiteness of Giotto's tower. Over the north-west door is a picture of especial interest to an English traveller—a portrait of an English soldier of fortune, Sir John Hawkwood, who, having fought at Crécy and Poitiers, and received the knightly accolade from Edward III, set off for Italy with a troop of followers as adventurous as he, and, after fighting for Pisa against Florence, decided to fight for Florence against Pisa, and lived and died the soldier of the Florentines. He has been called "the first real General of modern times," and he is a fine-looking fellow, sitting clad in armour on a proudly-pacing war-horse. The artist who painted this portrait was called Uccello ('little bird'), and he must have been an ingenious little bird, for he was the first to master and apply the rules of perspective, the rules by following which an artist can make the scenes he paints more lifelike by placing the objects at correct points, and with the right narrowing of the lines toward the horizon. Until these rules were discovered, pictures, especially groups and landscapes, had a queer flat look, without any depth or

Book of Other Lands

distance, and pavements tilted giddily forward, and people meant to be lying prone seemed to be standing on their heads ! So thrilled was Uccello by his own discovery, he could hardly tear himself away from his easel, and when his wife came to tell him that dinner was ready, all he would do was to repeat dreamily, over and over again, " How beautiful perspective is ! "

There is in Florence a great marble statue, larger than life, which every one ought to go and look at who is too easily daunted or discouraged by difficulties. This is the " David," carved by Michaelangelo out of a block of marble which another sculptor had tried his hand upon, and had found quite hopeless and impossible.

It was not only in parchment and marble and many-coloured paints that the gifted sons of Florence found an outlet for their genius. In the fifteenth century, her golden age, there lived and laboured by the Arno a family of craftsmen who produced some enchanting works of art in terra-cotta earthenware glazed over with white and intense blue, or, more seldom, with pale colours. The founder of this family was a certain Luca della Robbia ; he had a son, Giovanni, and a nephew, Andrea. Luca was a sculptor as well as a clay-modeller and a potter, and he carved for the cathedral a series of singing boys so life-like that one can almost hear the fresh young voices issuing from their parted lips. All the della Robbia craftsmen excelled at representing children (there is in the Victoria and Albert Museum an adorable chubby baby in della Robbia glaze playing gravely on a bagpipe almost as big as himself), and they seem to have co-operated to produce the lovely medallions of swaddled babies which adorn the Ospedale degli Innocenti, the Florentine Foundling Hospital. Ever since 1450 that hospital has received every year a large family of tiny children whose parents either could not or would not bring them up. You may see in the streets of Florence just such little creatures as the della Robbias wrought so lovingly in purest white and clearest blue, round-cheeked, grave-eyed, dimpled things, wrapped in swaddling-bands that give them the air of little Egyptian mummies suddenly come to life. These swaddling-

Italy

bands are still wound round the small limbs of many tiny Italians. An American or a British baby might rebel loudly, but the Italian babies are quite cheerful over it, and certainly when they begin to walk and run they are as merry and as fleet-footed as any children in the world.

The streets of Florence, like those of all Italian towns, are full of children, colour, and noise. The Tuscans use a peculiar sort of cart called a *baroccio*, to the making of which go many different varieties of wood. The shafts are of beech, the cross-board of elm, the floor-planks of cypress, the drag and the axle-box of acacia, the spokes of the wheels of ilex, the wheel-rims of walnut. To these barocci are usually harnessed two or three animals, not all of the same size or species. Their harness is hung with tassels and bells, and is never without some quaint little charm to ward off the Evil Eye.

The wanderer in the sunny, cheerful Florentine streets will feel a strange thrill when suddenly there appears round a corner a group of weird figures robed in black and wearing high-peaked hoods of the same hue with small slits before the eyes. Sometimes they are bearing a litter on which lies a sick person, sometimes a coffin. Their errand is always one of compassion either to the living or the dead, for these are members of the Brotherhood of the *Misericordia*. The founder of the society was a porter whose name was Pietro Borsi, and who lived in the thirteenth century. It occurred to him that he and his fellow-porters who spent their spare time gossiping and playing games of chance, while they waited for a job in the Piazza San Giovanni, would be better employed carrying the sick poor to the hospital, or, when all earthly aid had failed, in bearing to the churchyard their mortal remains. Until the fall of the Florentine Republic in 1530, the robe and hood of the *Misericordi* were scarlet; ever since then they have been black. The brotherhood is as powerful and active now as at any time in its long history, and its members are drawn from all classes. In each quarter of Florence there is a bell at whose sound the brothers belonging to that district don their weird disguise and 'report for duty.' The poor whom they befriend never know the identity of their benefactors, nor whether the eyes

Book of Other Lands

peering through the slits are those of a high-born Florentine or of a simple son of the people.

One of the most picturesque sights in the world is the Procession of the Holy Fire, which takes place on Easter Saturday every year. In the Church of the Apostles, at the close of the eight o'clock Mass, a spark is struck from flint and steel (we shall return to that flint later) and with it a candle is lit, and



WASHING-DAY ON LAKE MAGGIORE

set in a bronze processional lantern. Clergy and people then proceed on foot to the cathedral, where they usually arrive about nine o'clock, and the lantern comes to rest near the first pillar of the nave, so that the pious Florentines may kindle the tapers they have brought with them and thence bear the sacred spark to their own homes. Meanwhile there has been much excitement outside the beautiful ruddy-and-white cathedral. Already a wonderful car, drawn by white, flower-decked oxen, has taken up its position near the Baptistery, that exquisite building, rich in coloured marbles and wrought bronze, where Florentine babies have been christened for more

Italy

than five centuries. The car is festooned with fireworks, surmounted by a large Catherine-wheel laid flat, and from the car to the high altar of the cathedral runs a stout wire. The excitement increases, and reaches a climax when the *Gloria* is sung at the midday Mass, for it is at that moment that one of the deacons touches the sacred fire with a squib ! Hissing and spluttering, the squib darts along the wire, down the nave, and out through the west door. A moment later the banging of the fireworks on the car is almost drowned by the joyous pealing of the cathedral bells.

The origin of this ceremony is lost in the mists of antiquity, and is probably to be found in some pre-Christian rite of sun-worship ; but a picturesque legend clings round the two fragments of stone from which the Holy Fire has been struck ever since the eleventh century. The first Crusader to scale the walls of Jerusalem was a member of the Florentine family of Pazzi, and to him, in recognition of his valour, Godefroy de Bouillon gave two pieces of stone from the Holy Sepulchre, the same pieces of stone still preserved in the Church of the Apostles.

On Ascension Day the Florentines make holiday, and betake themselves in the cool, golden dawn to the Cascine, a public park, where they sit on the grass and picnic under the trees. Then they disperse in eager groups, hunting for the little black field-cricket, the *grilli*, to catch whom is the chief aim of their outing. Each family has brought with it a tiny cage made of buckwheat fibre, and in this cage they take home a grillo. The chirping of the captive insect is believed to bring good luck, and great efforts are made to keep him alive and vigorous until Corpus Christi—the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday. This custom also is said by the learned to have its source far back in the pagan past, when exiles from the Grecian islands founded a little Greek colony on the banks of the Arno. Pagan, too, is the origin of the *Ceppo*, the yule log, the sturdy tree-trunk once kindled upon every Tuscan hearth on Christmas Eve, and kept burning—if possible—until the feast of the Epiphany. Another Greek survival was the *Befana*, the black witch who, in the likeness of a dusky doll, was once paraded

Book of Other Lands

through the streets, to the sound of horns, bells, and whistles, on each fifth of January. Scholars recognize in the Befana the black Demeter of Phigalia. When Greek culture blossomed anew from the Florentine earth in the fifteenth century, it had found the most friendly soil in Europe—a soil already steeped in the myths and legends of ancient Greece.

East of Florence lies the Adriatic Sea, and north-east, on a



A VENETIAN WATER-SHRINE

chain of flat islands between the mouths of the rivers Brenta and Adige, lies the magical city of Venice, whose gorgeous palaces seem to float like ships at anchor in the Venetian Gulf. When Attila the Hun descended upon Aquileia in the year 452, these low-lying islands in the Adriatic lagoons were inhabited chiefly by water-birds, with perhaps an occasional forlorn family of fisherfolk. Fleeing before the savage invaders, some of the Aquileians took refuge in the Alps, some in the Apennines, and others, a coast-dwelling tribe known as the Venetii, on the strips of land where afterward rose the many-coloured splendour of the city that still bears their name. These refugees

Italy

were resourceful and energetic. They cut ditches to drain off the water, they made dykes of osier-branches, as the Dutch do to this day, and began to build houses for themselves. Soon they had the wisdom to perceive that in their struggle against Huns, Saracens, and Normans they could never hope to succeed unless they chose a leader and followed whither he led. Him whom they chose they called their 'Doge,' a corruption of the Latin word *Dux*, a leader, from which the English 'Duke' is also derived. The Venetians prospered greatly. Owing to their geographical position, their city was the ideal centre and clearing-house for the trade in silks and spices, ivory and gold, which grew up between Europe and the East. Venetian merchants were valiant. They fared over strange seas and landed on strange shores in quest of merchandise. And they were prudent also. They lent money and ships to the crusading princes of the West not only as an act of piety, but also in order to open up fresh markets for their adventurers. As early as the year 828, while the Moslems were plundering Alexandria, a small company of Venetian traders who happened to be on the scene quietly and swiftly seized and carried off with them the relics of the Apostle Mark. To avoid detection they are said to have concealed their booty under a cargo of swine! And it was thus that St Mark became—as he still is—the patron-saint of the Venetians, and that the marvellous, many-domed cathedral among the lagoons received his name.

Venice grew rapidly in wealth and power. Her citizens delighted to deck her with silver and gold, and marbles of a thousand radiant colours. From 1177 till the fall of the Venetian Republic a quaint and gorgeous ceremony took place every year on Ascension Day, when the Doge wedded the Adriatic with a golden ring. Trumpets clamoured and banners waved when he arrived in his gold-encrusted barge, and after he had flung the ring into the turquoise ripples, a great banquet was held, red wine was quaffed, sweet chestnuts and rare fruits were eaten, and the guests crowned each other with wreaths of damask roses.

Until in 1497 Vasco da Gama discovered the sea-route to the

Book of Other Lands

Indies round the Cape of Good Hope, Venice controlled the trade between East and West, and her coffers overflowed with pearl and gold. She had had many foes and a few rivals against whom to contend. Turkish corsairs harassed her fleets, and more than one Doge fell in battle against the enemies of the Republic. But somehow Venice turned even her troubles to gain. She lent her aid to the Greek emperors of Constantinople against their paynim adversaries, and obtained in exchange the right to trade without paying any dues or taxes in all the harbours of the East. Her ambassadors were seen and her name was held in honour at Jerusalem and Byzantium, at Aleppo and Alexandria, by the Nile and by the Rhine. Her long tussle with the Turks ended in a commercial treaty giving her merchants great advantages over the merchants of other European nations.

All the time Venice herself was growing more and more magnificent. Above everything the Venetians loved colour. They adorned their churches and palaces inside and outside with dazzling masses of mosaic in gold and in a thousand gorgeous hues, until they seemed to have borrowed all the glories of the sunset burning on the bright lagoons. As there are no paved streets in Venice, only canals, there are naturally no horses or wheeled vehicles, only boatmen and boats. Ah, but there *are* at least *four* horses in Venice, four very beautiful beasts. How do they get about? Do they swim? Are they carried in ships? The answer to all three questions is "No." For these horses are wrought in gilded bronze. They stand over the main porch of St Mark's, above the famous, faintly-coloured marble pavement where thousands of pigeons grow fat on the corn sprinkled by visitors. Yet, though they cannot stir their pawing golden hoofs, these horses have been great travellers in their day. They first saw the light in Rome, where Nero, the crazy emperor, set them upon an arch raised in his own honour. Trajan liked them so well that he shifted them from Nero's arch to one of *his* own. Constantine the Great, in his turn, took a fancy to them, and bore them off to decorate Byzantium. Thence they were brought to Venice by the Doge Enrico Dandolo, after a Venetian victory over the

Italy

Byzantines. And there they stood, snorting and pawing, until Napoleon's Italian campaign in 1797. After that their next journey was to Paris, with the spoils of the triumphant French army. Finally, after the battle of Waterloo, the emperor of Austria interceded on behalf of the Venetians, who had never ceased to lament their four bronze horses, and the far-travelled team were restored to their place over the main porch of St Mark's.

Venice was one of the first Western cities to import sugar from the East, and her people revelled in all sorts of sugared dishes while those in northern Europe had to depend entirely upon the diligence of the bees for their supply of sweet-stuffs. But she was not only a centre for the distribution of oriental merchandise. She herself sent great cargoes overseas—salted meat, wool, mirrors, finely-wrought glass-ware, woven fabrics, and gilded leather. Rather later came the lovely Venetian lace, of which the characteristic design is said to have been accidentally discovered by a fisher-girl playing idly with a net. Every square-sailed carrack, every high-pooed caravel, that dared the seas where the sun rose went forth laden, discharged her cargo, and brought with her on her return all the fragrant spoils of the silken East. Small wonder that the Venetians prospered mightily. Palaces of pale-hued marbles multiplied along the canals. These palaces had doorways of gilded bronze, and the metal trellis-work that filled their outer windows was also dabbled with gold. In one such glimmering palace dwelt Desdemona, and from just such barred and gilded windows must she have peeped to see if the gondola of the Moor were cleaving the ripples below. In the eyes of a Venetian girl the dark features of Othello would seem much less sinister and uncouth than they would have seemed in the eyes of a girl born farther north. Many Saracens had come to Venice, as captives, as ambassadors, as merchants, or as servants of the Republic. And many Venetians had journeyed to the lands where these and other bronze-featured strangers dwelt. In 1269 two of them, the brothers Polo, returned to Venice from a marvellous Eastern expedition, and a prolonged sojourn at the court of the Mongol emperor, Khubla

Book of Other Lands

Khan.¹ Nicola Polo had left behind him at home a small son called, after the patron saint of his native city, Marco. And when the far-faring brothers set forth on their travels again, young Marco, now an intelligent and stout-hearted youth, went with them. Their purpose in returning to the West was a romantic one. The great Khan was athirst for learning, as all truly



A METAL-WARE SHOP IN NORTH ITALY

great men have always been, and he sent the brothers on an embassy to the Pope, praying his Holiness to despatch one hundred Christian scholars to instruct him and his people in the faith, the arts, and the sciences of Christendom. Armed with an engraved tablet of solid gold which served as a safe-conduct in all the wild lands through which they passed, the two brothers slowly made their way back to Italy. Unex-

¹ See Chapter I of the present work; also T. C. Bridges, *The Book of Discovery*.



ST MARIA DELLA SALUTE, VENICE

192

This beautiful church, at the entrance to the Grand Canal, was erected to commemorate the deliverance of the city from the plague of 1630

Photo Donald McLeish



A SHRINE IN AOSTA CATHEDRAL
Photo Donald McLeish

Italy

pected difficulties hampered them in their endeavours to carry out the wishes of the Khan, among the chief of which was the fact that between the death of Pope Clement IV and the election of his successor, Gregory X, two years elapsed, and during those two years there was, of course, no Supreme Pontiff to whom they could deliver the Khan's message. When they *did* finally set out again, they took with them, in addition to young Marco, only *two* learned men. And those two un- luckily lost heart before they had gone very far, and turned back, terror-smitten at their first glimpse of the uncouth folk of Tartary. Khubla Khan does not seem to have been embittered by his disappointment, for he showered honours and rich gifts upon the three Venetians, kept them near him for many years, and was most reluctant to suffer them to return to their native land. Not until 1295 did the Poli return. And then their surviving friends and kindred found them altered almost beyond recognition. Indeed, who *could* perceive the two comely merchants of Venice and the fresh-faced young Marco in these travel-stained, shaggy strangers, who wore outlandish Tartar garments and spoke Italian stumblingly, with a queer foreign accent? But the coldness and the incredulity of their friends changed into delight when the three wanderers ripped open the seams of their uncouth attire and a glittering shower of precious gems poured from each seam!

A city built upon water has great need of two things—boats and bridges. Two Venetian bridges are famous all the world over—the Rialto and the Bridge of Sighs; and two Venetian types of boat have an especial historic interest, the *bucentaur*, the richly decorated state-barge of the Doges, and the *gondola*, the slim, high-prowed craft with a hooded shelter for passengers, propelled by a single boatman wielding a pole-like oar at the stern. What we call 'Venetian masts' are really the mooring-masts used by gondoliers. They are one of the most characteristic features of Venice, and a most picturesque one. Painted in all sorts of gay hues, often vivid blue or red, or in stripes, purple and white, blue and white, green and red, red and brown, they rise from the canals like slender columns, and strike their jagged and richly coloured

Book of Other Lands

reflections downward into the rippling water. There was a time when the gondolas were painted and gilded in the most costly fashion, but the Council of Ten, the rulers of Venice, passed a decree that plain black should be the only colour used, because the light-hearted young Venetian spendthrifts were wasting whole fortunes on the adornment of their slender craft. Until quite recently the Grand Canal was always sprinkled with these most picturesque boats, and gay with the songs and shouts of the gondoliers. But now every year the number of gondolas diminishes, while fussy little steamers become more and more numerous—fuming little steamers whose smoke blackens the Rialto and the Bridge of Sighs.

The Rialto spans the Grand Canal, and was once a great meeting-place for merchants. It was there that Antonio and Bassanio used to “rate” Shylock and, most impolitely, “spit upon his Jewish gabardine.”¹ It is a covered bridge, with six arches on either side of a larger central arch. In Shylock’s time an enormous map of the world hung there, for the aid of merchants. If Shakespeare had happened to know this he would no doubt have shown us Antonio anxiously scanning this map, and tracing with a trembling forefinger the probable whereabouts of his overdue galleons.

The Bridge of Sighs is also a covered bridge, much more closely covered than that of the Rialto. It is a graceful and very beautiful structure, with four square windows, two on either side, filled with a network of exquisitely carved and fretted marble. Its grim name, and its origin, are both well known to many people who have never either visited Venice or dipped very deep into Venetian history. The function of this bridge was to connect the palace of the Doges with the state-prison. Through its closely trellised windows many a luckless captive had his last desperate glimpse of the light of day, as his jailors hurried him from the place of condemnation to the place of doom. One of the most beautiful of all the bridges in Venice, it is also the most tragic of all the bridges in the world.

This resplendent city, a golden city upon waters of pearl

¹ Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*. Act i, scene 3.

Italy

and gold, has had many lovers who have come from far grey lands to worship her beauty. Among them none has declared his fealty with greater eloquence than John Ruskin. He knew and loved every aspect of Venice, every grim or gorgeous page in her story. But to him she was above all else *Mark's Rest*, just as she was to her citizens in the days of her greatest glory. If you reach the Piazza San Marco by way of a narrow alley at the end opposite the Basilica, and if you have with you some friend wise in the lore of that enchanted spot, you will be told to close your eyes until you stand on the threshold of the vast square, with the clustering domes and golden pinnacles of St Mark's before you. You catch your breath at its beauty ; your eyes are dazzled by its almost barbaric massing of colours and forms. From three mighty masts hang three huge silken banners that open out proudly in the breeze. The four famous horses seem to be pacing majestically toward us from their place above the great porch. The air is full of the murmuring of pigeons and the whirl of their iridescent wings. Between the Basilica and the canal of St Mark, facing the sunrise, stands the Doge's palace, with its marvellous façade of fretted marble. Inside, it is a treasure-house of Venetian art, and there may best be studied the works of the Venetian masters, the golden gloom of Veronese, the auburn splendours and shadows of Titian, the placid, deep-tinted grace of Bellini, the rich colours and vigorous curves of Tintoretto, whom Ruskin numbered among the "five supreme



THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

and gold, has had many lovers who have come from far grey lands to worship her beauty. Among them none has declared his fealty with greater eloquence than John Ruskin. He knew and loved every aspect of Venice, every grim or gorgeous page in her story. But to him she was above all else *Mark's Rest*, just as she was to her citizens in the days of her greatest glory. If you reach the Piazza San Marco by way of a narrow alley at the end opposite the Basilica, and if you have with you some friend wise in the lore of that enchanted spot, you will be told to close your eyes until you stand on the threshold of the vast square, with the clustering domes and golden pinnacles of St Mark's before you. You catch your breath at its beauty ; your eyes are dazzled by its almost barbaric massing of colours and forms. From three mighty masts hang three huge silken banners that open out proudly in the breeze. The four famous horses seem to be pacing majestically toward us from their place above the great porch. The air is full of the murmuring of pigeons and the whirl of their iridescent wings. Between the Basilica and the canal of St Mark, facing the sunrise, stands the Doge's palace, with its marvellous façade of fretted marble. Inside, it is a treasure-house of Venetian art, and there may best be studied the works of the Venetian masters, the golden gloom of Veronese, the auburn splendours and shadows of Titian, the placid, deep-tinted grace of Bellini, the rich colours and vigorous curves of Tintoretto, whom Ruskin numbered among the "five supreme

Book of Other Lands

painters" of the world. Yet there is something sinister in all this magnificence. Here was the centre of a ruthless, intricate, and subtle system which paralysed the whole fabric of Venetian social and political life, and doomed many an innocent man to cross the Bridge of Sighs. You can see the very letter-box which received the unsigned denunciations that sent countless such men to captivity and death. And you breathe more freely when you find yourself out on the Piazzetta of St Mark, with the salt breeze from the Lido in your nostrils, and the picturesque little island of St Giorgio immediately opposite, its queerly oriental-looking group of domes and minarets shining white and saffron and deep yellow in the kindly light of the Italian sun.

On either hand you will not fail to observe a lofty pillar of rose-tinted granite, each surmounted by a statue. Long since those pillars formed part of a Christian church at Ptolemais; long since those statues were wrought in far-off Cæsarea. On the southern side stands St Theodore; on the northern side, the lion of St Mark. He is a fierce beast, though it cannot be said that he bears a very close resemblance to the lion of zoology—the lion of art seldom *did* in the olden time. He crouches as though for a spring, his wings erect, his mane rippling in neat curls, as if it had been waved with tongs. On his parted lips is a weird, expectant grin, and he gazes eastward across the Adriatic. Perhaps he is dreaming of the vanished days that he must remember so well, when the fleets of Venice rode at anchor in the gulf, their painted sails furled, their prows striking zigzags of wavering gold downward into the water, their stout hulls laden with bales of silk and barrels of spices and casks of rubies and pearls. Perhaps it is in the vain hope of seeing one of those brave and beautiful ships loom on the horizon once more that the lion of St Mark gazes seaward with that expectant grin upon his parted lips.

CHAPTER IX

SPAIN

ONCE upon a time, many thousands of years ago, there was a land-bridge connecting Europe with Africa at the point where the two continents are now separated by the Straits of Gibraltar. It is only if we bear this in mind, and realize that Spain was once the northernmost extremity of Africa, that we can understand the character of the Spanish people and the strange history, sombre and splendid, of their native land.

The isthmus between Ceuta and Gibraltar had long disappeared when, at the beginning of the eighth century A.D. the Moors invaded and conquered Spain; but there seems to have been a certain natural kinship between the two peoples which made it easy for the Moorish conquerors to found that marvellous kingdom where science and civilization were kept alive at a time when the more northerly parts of Europe were plunged in the gloom of the Dark Ages. The great, lion-shaped rock of Gibraltar still bears, in a slightly altered form, the name of the Moorish general, Tarik, whose seven thousand dusky-skinned warriors landed under its shadow in the year 711—Gebel-Tarik, the Rock of Tarik, it was called in the Arabic tongue.

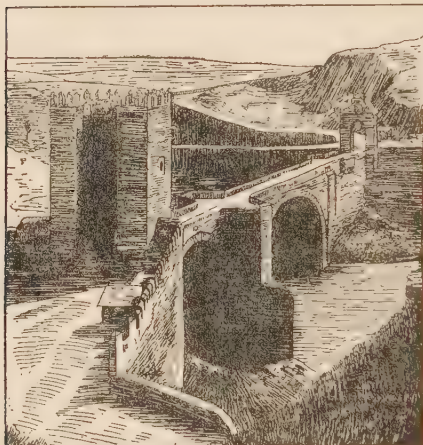
Tarik and his troops were by no means the first strangers to invade Spain. Phœnician and Greek traders had come thither long before. The Phœnicians dubbed the land Hispania, which some learned people declare means "the Land of Many Rabbits," and the Greeks gave it the name of Iberia, whence it is called the Iberian Peninsula to this day. Then came the Carthaginians, who ruled over Hispania, and worked its rich silver mines, until Rome finally overthrew Carthage in the second Punic War. Then the Romans "dug themselves in," and built strong walls and mighty bridges,

Book of Other Lands

many of which have survived, notably at Cordova and Alcantara. Rome fell in her turn, and *her* victors, the Goths from the shores of the Baltic, pushed their way westward and

southward, and took possession of Spain. Those who settled there were the Visigoths; their kindred, the Ostrogoths, remained entrenched in Italy.

All these conquests and invasions left their mark upon the country and the people of Spain, but none had a more lasting influence than the Moorish occupation. You see its trace all over southern and central Spain, in the forms and colours of the



THE BRIDGE OF ALCANTARA

buildings, in the looks and habits of the Spaniards themselves. You find the Oriental type of house, built round a central courtyard, its outer windows closely grated with iron; you find mosques—most of them Christian churches now—with the horse-shoe arch and the dome characteristic of Mohammedan art. Above all things, you find in the temperament of the inhabitants that curious fatalism, that paralysing belief that “*what will be, will be,*” that disregard of time and progress, that tinge of cruelty, that aloofness and reserve, that are qualities of the East rather than of the West.

In northern Spain, especially in Galicia, the traces of Moorish influence are much less deep and clear. Galicia has been called the Brittany of Spain. Like ‘*Armoric-Bretagne,*’ it is a bleak and barren province, whose peasants are mostly fisherfolk, simple, rather melancholy souls, who, like their fellow-Celts in France, Scotland, and Ireland, make ‘*music*’ upon the bagpipes in moments of joy or festivity. Southern Spain more closely approaches the land of our dreams, the

Spain

sun-browned land of olives and oranges. So we will land in Spain near the place where Tarik landed so many hundreds of years ago, and have a glimpse of Granada and Seville before we turn northward to Toledo and Madrid and Burgos, or eastward to Valencia, the realm of Spain's national hero, Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, the Cid.

Granada was the last stronghold of the Moors in Spain, whence they were driven forth by Ferdinand the Catholic, father of Henry VIII's Queen, Catharine of Aragon, as late as 1492. For nearly eight hundred years the Moorish kingdom in Europe had been a centre of culture, grace, and magnificence. Students from other lands flocked thither to study mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and philosophy from Arab sages, while Arab architects raised mosques and palaces that were marvels of beauty, and Arab craftsmen wrought in clay and wood and metals with such exquisite skill that the surviving fragments are a wonder and a delight to this day. Under Moorish rulers Andalusia was a fertile land, a land of groves and fountains and orchards laden with fruit. On a lofty natural terrace, flanked by steep cliffs and overlooking the valley of the Vega, the Moorish princes built their famous Red Castle, the Alhambra, at Granada. There, under a great embattled tower, the Caliphs used to sit and mete out even-handed justice to the people, in a place still called the Gate of Justice. Much remains, though still more has vanished, of this dreamlike building, with its delicate tracery of marble, its glittering designs traced in coloured tiles, its slender groves of columns, its paven courts and lion-guarded fountains in whose green ripples the goldfish flicker to and fro. The flanks of the rock are clothed with elm-trees and, in early summer, sweet with the voices of nightingales; but the Moors who held their golden pageants under the delicately curved and pierced arches above never saw those trees or heard those nightingales. It was the Duke of Wellington who planted the cool groves, when he sojourned at Granada during the Peninsula War, and, as the English trees grew, the Spanish nightingales multiplied among their un-Spanish branches.

Even in the hottest days of summer, the elms of the Iron

Book of Other Lands

Duke and the myrtles and cypresses and roses of the Caliphs are stirred by cool breezes from the snow-capped mountain-range of the Sierra Nevada, from which narrow and swift green torrents fall, with refreshing murmurs and gushings, to the broad plain below. Like the ancient Romans, the Moors loved the sight and the sound of fountains, and one of the most beautiful courts of the fantastic Red Castle is the Court of the



A PRIEST IN RICH VESTMENTS OF
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Lions, where stands a fountain upheld by twelve carven beasts, all grinning broadly, and all with unusually short legs. And, like the later Cæsars, the Moors seem to have loved exaggerated praises of themselves. Round the Court of Myrtles runs an Arabic inscription in honour of a certain Mohammed the Fifth. "Thou givest safety," he was informed, "from the breeze even unto the blades of grass; thou fillest the very stars of heaven with fear. When the stars tremble, it is for fear of thee; when the grass of the field bends low, it is to give thee thanks."

When Ferdinand the Catholic and his pious Queen, Isabella, had driven forth the Moors from their last stronghold at Granada, they took possession of the Red Castle, and held their court within its fantastically beautiful walls. The Hall of the Ambassadors, a lofty apartment roofed with carven larchwood inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, is especially interesting to the American visitor, for, according to tradition, it was here that Christopher Columbus stood before Queen Isabella, and spoke burning words to her of the wealth and glory to be won by Spain in the New World that lay beyond the seas of the West.

To the English or American traveller the streets of a

Spain

Spanish town may not seem very clean, but if he were to step into the kitchen of a typical Spanish house he would be delighted with the spotless whiteness of the walls and the dazzling brilliance of the copper pots and pans. A Spanish cook gets up very early in the morning, and goes, often accompanied by her mistress, to the market-place in order to get fresh and good supplies for the needs of the day. She is not a sensitive person, so she chooses ducks and chickens that are still "alive and kicking," and watches calmly while they are killed and plucked. But she *is* devout, and may carry her rosary in one hand and her shopping-basket in the other, so that, when her task is done, she may slip quietly into the cathedral or the vast, shadowy church that towers above the sunny, many-coloured market-place, and say a simple 'Ave, Maria' in one of the side-chapels, to the faint murmur of long-drawn-out Latin prayers from the priests at the high altar.

Each division of Spain has its own favourite dish. In Castile it is *puchero*, made with chick-peas, beef, a special kind of mysterious sausage, and potatoes. In Valencia it is *arroz valenciano*, of which the ingredients are rice, olive oil, red pepper in the pod, and veal, rabbit or mutton, cooked very slowly in an earthenware vessel. If the meat be omitted, it is called '*arroz viudo*,' widowed rice! *Olla podrida* is the national dish of northern Spain, and resembles Irish stew, though elsewhere than in Galicia it might be found a little too highly flavoured and just a trifle oily, as garlic, aromatic herbs, and olive oil are added to the onions, potatoes, and mutton. In La Mancha, the native province of dear Don Quixote, *pisto* is a prime favourite, and consists of eggs fried in oil with red and green pepper-pods. Sevillians prefer their own *gazpacho*, a salad made of lettuces, tomatoes, cucumbers, garlic, and, of course, the inevitable pepper-pods! At a table in a house of the poorer class you will see no plates. A large bowl stands in the middle, each member of the family has a spoon, and there you are!

Tennyson speaks of the "courtly Spanish grace," and there is no country in the world, with the possible exception of China

Book of Other Lands

before the revolution, where grave and ceremonious politeness has been so long and so highly esteemed. The dignity of the Spaniard is natural, and free from all touch of affectation or pose. The poorest never cringes, the richest never, as children say, "puts on airs." The Spanish gentleman may be rather reserved with foreigners—whom he does not greatly love—but in his own house he is a charming host, an indulgent father, and the kindest of masters to the devoted servants who never dream of leaving him to seek another. Spaniards of the lower classes are most approachable. Indeed, their greatest fault is indolence, and an Oriental tendency to put off everything till *manaña* (to-morrow), which somehow never becomes *hoy* (to-day). Perhaps the waiters in your hotel may be too keen on the game of chess they are playing together to answer whenever you call, but when they *do* come, they are sincerely anxious to serve you well. The shopman may seem reluctant to remove his cigarette and show you his wares, but he is always ready to tell you which theatres have the best plays 'on,' and when the next big bull-fight will be held. Daily life is full of graceful phrases. A Spaniard invites you to call upon him by giving you his address and adding, "You have a house there." If you knock down his umbrella or stamp on his foot, he will reply to your apologies with a gentle "*Vaya usted con Dios*"—"Go, and God go with you!" The poorest peasant will offer you a handful of figs or a drink of water with the most delightful grace, will be reluctant to accept a 'tip,' and will thank you for it with perfect ease. If one of the all-too-numerous beggars should pursue you, you must not scowl, or look away, or quicken your pace, or say, "Go away!" Instead, you may say either "*Perdóneme usted*" ('Excuse me'), or add to that phrase the words "*per el amor de Dios*" ('for the love of God'). Then, not to be outdone in politeness, he will leave you, with a bow and a smile.

The Spaniards, like the Moors, are naturally and instinctively hospitable. If you visit a Moor, he will say, "You have taken possession of your house," meaning that his house is now yours; and a Spanish host uses almost the same words, though in another and more musical language. Instead of signing his

Spain

letters to a new acquaintance, "Yours sincerely," or "Very truly yours," the Spaniard will wind up with, "I am your very affectionate and loyal servant, who kisses your hand." In either a Spanish or a Moorish house you must take care not to express your admiration of any object you see there, for if you *do*, you will at once find it thrust into your hands with the earnest request that you should keep it "for good."

Grave and dignified to the outside world though the Spanish gentleman may be, and cruel though his national pastime, the bull-fight, may seem in our more sensitive eyes, his children know him as the most generous, indulgent, and sympathetic of fathers. Indeed, the Spanish child is all too often a very spoilt little person indeed! Rich or poor, he has plenty of toys—for toys in Spain are quaint, delightful, and amazingly cheap.

A working-class mother in Spain cannot bear to think that her baby may be hungry, so he has usually a roasted chestnut, a slice of melon, half a hard-boiled egg, or a lettuce leaf in his tiny fist. Nor will she leave him at home if she goes out to work. Many of the cigarette-makers at Seville bring their babies with them to the factory, and rock the cradle with one foot, while with both hands they roll and twist the thin tubes of tobacco leaf. At Christmas, a sort of nougat, very sticky and very sweet, is given as a treat to even the poorest child. Children play a great part in Spanish life. They drive donkeys, they gather oranges, they walk in religious processions, and, like the children of other lands, they like work much less than play. It will be a very long time before the laziness and gaiety of Spain's poorer children are disturbed by the prospect of school. The Government are very anxious to introduce a scheme of universal compulsory education, but they have a tremendous task before them, for there are not nearly enough schoolmasters to go round. Out of the twenty million inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, only one million can read and write—that is to say, only five out of every hundred.

You would think that people who could not read, and who would have hardly any books if they *could*, people who knew little or nothing about the outside world and who were, as a whole, exceedingly poor, would find life somewhat dull. But

Book of Other Lands

this is far from being the case in Spain. The Spaniards have several sources of delight which richer people in more up-to-date countries might well envy them. First comes their love of music and dancing, and their skill in both arts; next, the constant succession of gorgeous religious pageants which marks the progress of the seasons throughout the land. Their



A GROUP FROM A RELIGIOUS
PROCESSION

third amusement is one which we should not care to imitate, but it cannot be denied that, in spite of the revolting cruelty of the bull-ring, a bull-fight is a thrilling spectacle, especially to the Spanish crowd, which understands every point scored just as an English crowd understands a cricket or football match. Happily, enthusiasm for bull-fighting is not so keen in Spain as it used to be, and enthusiasm for football, tennis, and other genuine sports is steadily growing. Perhaps the time may not be very far distant when the Spaniards will realize that an amusement, however picturesque, dangerous, and exciting, which involves so much bloodshed and suffering, is not worthy of a

race so ancient, so courtly, and so civilized as theirs. It is, after all, a relic of Roman and Moorish days, and has died out everywhere else. In Portugal, the bull-fight is quite a different thing. No horses are killed, and no bulls. The horns of the chief 'actor' are padded, and one of the feats of the expert toreador is to leap lightly over them.

The stranger will be surprised to see how favourite a colour black is with the Spanish people, and how well it suits them. The men wear broad-brimmed hats, called *sombreros*, short

Spain

jackets, and trousers that grow enormously wide round the ankles, as sailors' trousers do. Among the upper classes the fashion—set by King Alfonso—of a brushed-up moustache is widely followed, but in other ranks clean-shaven faces, perhaps with a thin strip of whisker in front of each ear, and close-cropped beards are more often seen. Two very characteristic items in the national costume of the Spaniard are the leather gaiters, fitting loosely on the instep, and the tambourine-shaped black hat, sometimes adorned with pompoms at one side. This is the type of head-gear favoured by the toreador, whose 'official' attire is delightfully picturesque. His jacket and knee-breeches are of rich silken stuff, rose-coloured, grey, white, vivid blue, or purple, heavily embroidered with gold; the round cape which he wears slung over one shoulder when he enters the arena is also embroidered, and may be sewn with little jewels as well. On his legs—which are usually somewhat podgy—he has white silk stockings, and on his feet flat black or coloured leather slippers not unlike the dancing pumps worn in other lands. From the back of his head hangs a little plait of hair—the *coleta*—which marks him as a member of the *torero* profession, and which he solemnly and—no doubt—regretfully lops off when he retires for ever from the bull-ring.

Every one knows that the mantilla, the head-shawl of black or white silken lace, is worn by Spanish ladies, but not every one realizes how seldom it is worn in the street, or that the black lace scarf which Spanish women of almost every class drape over their heads is *not* a mantilla at all. This last is a



A TOREADOR

Book of Other Lands

precious and beautiful possession, often an heirloom. The Spanish lady wears a black one when she goes to church during Holy Week, a white one when she attends a bull-fight or drives in her carriage to a *Feria*, or popular fair. The high comb, of exquisitely worked tortoise-shell, is another familiar item in the costume of the Spanish lady, as are also the dangling earrings, the gracefully manipulated fan, and, on some occasions, the *manton de Manila*, a fringed and embroidered shawl. Spanish women who are too poor to possess the mantilla console themselves by arranging their kerchiefs on their heads in the same way as the lace headdress is arranged, and in all Spain there is hardly one girl so poor or so dejected that she will not tuck a fresh flower into her thick black hair every day. The carnation, white or deep red, is the favourite, and in the great cigar and cigarette factory at Seville you see these flowers carefully placed in small vases of water while their owners are at work.

Seville, the city of oranges and cigarettes, is one of the most interesting in all Spain. Its cathedral belfry, the *Giralda*¹ (once the minaret of a mosque), deserves to rank, for grace and beauty, with Giotto's tower at Florence. The cathedral itself is the largest in Europe, with the solitary exception of St Peter's at Rome. The builders declared that it was their deliberate purpose to raise an edifice so vast that the onlooker should think they were mad to have attempted it! Among the many treasures of this stupendous building is Murillo's famous picture of St Anthony of Padua and the infant Christ. Another, much less beautiful, is the tomb of Christopher Columbus. The discoverer of America was, of course, a Genoese, but his career was so closely associated with Spain that the world has come to regard him as a sort of Spaniard by adoption. He, whose courage and enterprise opened up the wealth and the wonders of the New World to the fleets of Ferdinand the Catholic, died a disappointed and neglected man. Valladolid was the place of his death in 1506, but it was at the monastery of Triana, near Seville, that he was buried.

¹ So called from the great bronze *giraldillo*, or vane, by which it is surmounted.

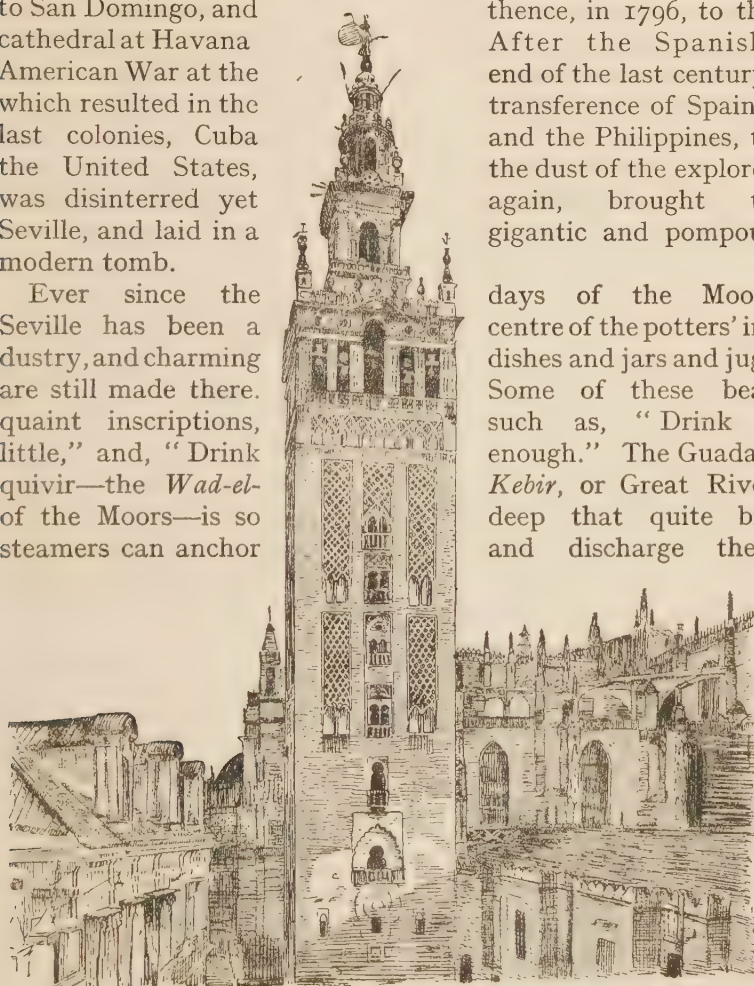
Spain

After many and long voyagings, his bones were not destined to rest long undisturbed. In 1536 they were removed from Spain to San Domingo, and cathedral at Havana American War at the which resulted in the last colonies, Cuba the United States, was disinterred yet Seville, and laid in a modern tomb.

Ever since the Seville has been a dusty, and charming are still made there. quaint inscriptions, little," and, "Drink quivir—the *Wad-el* of the Moors—is so steamers can anchor

thence, in 1796, to the After the Spanish-end of the last century, transference of Spain's and the Philippines, to the dust of the explorer again, brought to gigantic and pompous

days of the Moors centre of the potters' indishes and jars and jugs Some of these bear such as, "Drink a enough." The *Guadal-Kebir*, or Great River deep that quite big and discharge their



THE GIRALDA, SEVILLE

cargoes at the quay of Seville. The harbour-master has his offices in an ancient Moorish tower on the brink of the tawny water—the famous Golden Tower, though it is no longer

Book of Other Lands

golden. Sevillian tradition declares that in the days of the city's highest splendour its walls were encased in solid gold, but it seems more likely that the actual casing was of Moorish tiles, which have, like Persian tiles, a peculiar metallic lustre, and might well shine like precious metal in the intense light of the Andalusian sun.

Nobody who has not spent Holy Week in Seville can have any idea of the part played in the life of the Spanish people by the curious and gorgeous pageants then held in the cathedral and in the streets, narrow, dark and winding, of the old town. To the steady throbbing of drums the most amazing processions wend their way to the cathedral square. Each of the Guilds of Seville has its own procession, its own images to carry, its own special dress. This dress resembles that of the Misericordi of Florence, only instead of being all black the robes and high-peaked hoods are of various hues—purple, white, etc. One Guild will have a sort of tableau, representing a scene from the New Testament, with life-sized waxen figures dressed in garments lavishly trimmed with tinsel and surrounded by oil-lamps on brazen brackets. The cigarette girls have a statue and a procession all to themselves. Their statue, a brightly-coloured one of Our Lady of Victories, wears most magnificent garments and really valuable jewels, provided by the piety and enthusiasm of the *Cigarreras*.

Three times a year a most extraordinary ceremony is to be witnessed in the cathedral of Seville. This is a *dance*, performed by choir-boys before the high altar. In 1264, when the Festival of Corpus Christi was first instituted, the clergy of the cathedral arranged a pageant in which a model of the Ark of the Covenant was borne in procession, followed by a company of boys, dressed as angels, singing and dancing as David did of old. The quaint custom has never fallen into disuse, but the modern dancers wear the costume of Court pages of the reign of Philip III, only scarves of white taffeta represent the wings of their far-off predecessors.

The dance is an exceedingly solemn affair, graceful and slow. At first the boys sing as they dance, but presently the organ and the string-orchestra provide the only music, and the



A STREET SCENE IN TOLEDO

Photo E.N.A.



A BULL-FIGHT IN SEVILLE

Photo E. N. A.

Spain

dancers mark the rhythm with the faint click of castanets. There are no sudden or violent movements, neither hands nor heels are raised, and all the stages of this pious dance take place in a space as small as ten by seven feet.

A little to the north-east of Seville lies Cordova, the capital of the Moorish Caliphs, once a centre of art and learning and bewildering splendour. In those days it was a city of fretted minarets and golden domes, of marble palaces and silver fountains, pomegranate groves, and gardens of cypress and myrtle. Stripped of its former glories, the Great Mosque of Cordova still stands: its lapis-lazuli pillars, its silver pavements, its brazen doors and hanging lamps of jasper and bronze have long been swept away; instead of the muezzin, the angelus echoes from its tower; instead of the Koran, the holy books of the Christian 'unbelievers' are chanted among its horse-shoe arches. The cloister-garth is planted with orange-trees, under whose canopies of dark green leaf, pale silver blossom and burnished golden fruit, the women of Cordova come with great earthenware jars, which they fill with water from the fountains once used by the Moors for their ceremonial bathing.

Like the old houses in other parts of Spain, the Cordovan houses are built on the Moorish plan, with a central courtyard or *patio*, very fresh, green, and restful after the glare and gloom of the high and narrow streets and the sun-baked squares. In the Middle Ages this city was famous for its leather, and for the skill of its tanners. Hides from which shoes were made were imported by the English shoemakers from Cordova—hence their mediæval name of 'Cordwainers,' or workers in Cordovan leather.

Under the Moors there was great demand in Spain itself for this fine leather. Harness, sword-belts, slippers, curtains, mats, and book-bindings were all made of it; but for their marvellous sword-blades, their helmets and bucklers and lance-tips, the Moors and, after them, the Spaniards looked rather to the armourers of the city of Toledo, farther to the north.

Toledo, a grim city of frowning gates and sombre bridges,

Book of Other Lands

is built upon a rocky bluff above the deep and narrow valley through which runs the river Tagus, and was once the capital of Castile. It has, of course, a magnificent cathedral, some quaint houses with overhanging balconies and Moorish patios, and a mosque transformed into a Christian church. This mosque, now dedicated to Cristo de la Luz, Christ of the Light, has a curious legend attached to it.

When Alfonso VI rode in triumph into Toledo, Spain's national hero was among the knights in his train. This national hero was Rodrigo (or Ruy) Diaz of Bivar, better known by the name of the Cid (Arabic *Seyyid*, a lord or master), bestowed upon him by the Moors. Ruy Diaz spent the best part of his life fighting, sometimes for the Moors, but more often against them. In his own way he was as much a soldier of fortune as Sir John Hawkwood, the English adventurer whose tomb we saw in the cathedral at Florence. He was not the "very perfect gentle knight" of chivalric romance, not the "*chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*"; but, on the other hand, mercenary, cruel, and high-handed though many of his actions seem, the Cid undeniably possessed, both in life and in death, the gift of inspiring enthusiasm. Old Spanish chroniclers glow with admiration when they write of him. Old Spanish ballads clang with the glory of his name.

Now, of Rodrigo de Bivar great was the fame that run,
How he five kings had vanquishèd, proud Moormen every one.

(That is how Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart, translated the Spanish verse.)

The horse upon which the Cid rode into Toledo was his famous charger, Bavioca, and the road he followed was steep and slippery. At the foot there stood a little mosque, and before this mosque Bavioca fell upon his knees. Now, the name of 'Bavioca' means 'a simpleton,' but the Cid had a very high opinion of the intelligence of his steed, and instead of railing at him for stumbling, he gave orders that the wall of the mosque should be broken open. When this was done, a niche containing an image of Christ appeared. This niche had been walled up during the Moorish domination, but,

Spain

according to the legend, there was a candle burning before the image still ! Wherefore, when the mosque was changed into a church it was dedicated to the Christ of the Light.

The fame of Toledo as the centre of the swordsmiths' art goes back beyond Moorish times, and is alluded to both by Livy and Polybius. So flexible was the finest type of Toledo blade, it could be rolled up like a watch-spring and yet lie straight again when released.

Almost due north of Toledo stands Madrid, the wind-swept capital of Spain, said to be by turns the hottest and the coldest city of Europe. It is built upon a height 2130 feet above sea-level, to the south of the snowy mountain-range of the Sierra de Guadarrama, whence come those strange chilly blasts which, according to the Spanish proverb, will kill a man though they will not blow out a candle ! Small wonder that in winter the *Madridēnos* go about closely muffled in huge, thick cloaks !

Not long since there was a lively newspaper discussion as to which capital in Europe could be called the noisiest, and a very powerful claim was made on behalf of Madrid. There the clang of the tram-bells mingles with the deep-throated braying of motor-horns, horses' hoofs clatter on the cobblestones, the harness of donkeys and mules tinkles cheerfully. Added to these are noises of human making—the shrill cries of newsboys, the eager shouts of hawkers selling beads, combs, and tickets for the national lottery, while from the side-streets may come the soft strumming of guitars.

This windy, noisy, interesting city is associated with the careers of Spain's two most celebrated sons, Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, and the court painter, Velasquez. Miguel de Cervantes Saavadra, to give him his full name, was a man of action in his early days, and served as a soldier under the gallant young Don John of Austria, half-brother of Philip II, in the great sea-fight at Lepanto, so stirringly described in Mr G. K. Chesterton's ballad. There he was so severely wounded that his left arm remained crippled for the remainder of his life. On his way home from Tunis, he was captured by Algerine pirates and sold as a slave in Algiers,

Book of Other Lands

where he remained five weary years in captivity and whence he made four desperate and ingenious efforts to escape. But even after he was ransomed and had returned to Spain his troubles were not at an end. Don John, his brilliant young commander, was dead. Cervantes had no friends at Court. After trying various ways of making a livelihood, he took to writing plays, for in the sixteenth century, just as now, the



CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN DEL PUERTA, MADRID

Spaniards were great lovers of the theatre. Only two of his thirty dramatic works have survived ; but in 1605 there was published at Madrid a book which is recognized to be one of the chief literary masterpieces of the world. What exactly *is Don Quixote* ? It is not a novel, though it has a hero, plot and action like a novel ; it is not a satire, though its original intention was to make fun of the exaggerated and artificial chivalric traditions which lingered in Spain after they had died out in other lands ; it is not a tale told for children, though children have loved it for more than three hundred years. It is, says one critic, it is Spain itself—the country, the people, the colour, the atmosphere, and the landscape of Spain.

Spain

Every one knows the figure of the Knight of La Mancha and his scraggy steed Rosinante, and his podgy esquire Sancho Panza, and Sancho Panza's donkey. Every one knows how the Don went forth in quest of adventures, eager to do battle with giants and Turks, and to rescue damsels in distress, and how he tilted at a windmill, whose revolving sails he mistook for the arms of a giant, and at a flock of sheep, whom he fondly thought to be an army of enemies. But no one who has read the whole story of Don Quixote's knight-errantry will dismiss him as a foolish old dreamer, perhaps more than a little mad. The Don was, with all his folly, the finest type of Spanish gentleman, a *hidalgo* (*hijo de algo*, the son of somebody), gentle, courteous, uncomplaining, honourable, and valiant. Cervantes himself fell under the spell of his own creation, and many who had "come to scoff remained to pray." The great romance written to poke fun at the moth-eaten chivalric legend turned out to be the enduring expression of the chivalric idea at its best. You may smile at the poor Don, his wild deeds, and his yet wilder dreams, but it will be a kindly smile, not a mocking one, and sometimes, as the long tale draws to an end, tears will not be very far away.

Cervantes died at Madrid on 23rd April 1616—the year, and, it seems probable, the day of Shakespeare's death. At Seville, on 6th June 1599, was born another Spaniard destined to bring glory and renown to his native land. This was Diego de Silva y Velasquez—for, having given Cervantes his full name, we cannot deny Velasquez *his* ! At the age of twenty-four, young Diego came to Madrid, bringing with him a picture called "The Water Seller"—the same picture presented nearly two hundred years later to the Duke of Wellington by King Ferdinand VII. This attracted the attention of Philip IV, grandson of that gloomy Philip II who launched the Great Armada against Elizabeth of England, and Velasquez received a commission to paint a portrait of his Majesty. So well pleased was the King with the young artist's handiwork, he appointed him Court painter, and then began that long series of wonderful pictures in which Velasquez has made his royal master, the royal children, and the admirals, prime

Book of Other Lands

ministers, poets and Court fools of seventeenth-century Spain live for ever. To appreciate the greatness of Velasquez one must study his work at the Prado Museum in Madrid. Nowhere else in the world are so many of his masterpieces. He excelled in the delicate and difficult art of painting children, and some of his most delightful portraits are of the grave-eyed little sons and daughters of the Spanish King. Who has not seen and does not love the chubby Prince Balthazar Carlos, sitting so upright on his long-tailed black pony? Less attractive is the prim Princess Margaret, with her hands drooping languidly on her enormous farthingale. Yet this same Princess, before the gloomy stateliness of the Spanish Court had made *her* gloomy and stately too, was a most engaging little person. She is the central figure of one of the most celebrated pictures in the Prado—"Las Meninas," the Maids of Honour. You see the small Princess standing between two charming Spanish ladies, one of whom, kneeling down, offers her a glass of water, while the other is in the act of dropping a curtsy. On your right is a queer, clumsy figure in a braided silken gown—one of those unfortunate dwarfs who were kept at the Court to amuse the King and Queen as much by their odd looks as by their jokes. In front of this dwarf is a splendid mastiff, apparently enjoying a snooze. On your extreme left you see the back of an unfinished picture, the canvas stretched on its wooden frame and leaning against a half-seen easel. There is a painter in midst of his task standing by the easel, brush in hand and palette upon thumb—a handsome fellow, with watchful, dark eyes, an upward-sweeping moustache, and what we should now call 'bobbed hair.' That is Velasquez himself. If you look closely into the centre of the picture you will notice two people, a man and a woman, reflected in the oblong mirror which hangs there. They are King Philip and Queen Mariana of Spain, who have come to see how their clever Court painter, Don Diego de Silva y Velasquez, is progressing with the portrait of their little daughter which they have commanded him to paint.

One of the most celebrated buildings in the world is the

Spain

vast Escorial—palace, monastery, and sepulchral mansion in one—erected by the gloomy Philip II among the grey and gloomy mountains of the Sierra de Guadarrama, to the north of Madrid. It was a curious spot to choose. The mountains, seamed with iron-ore, had been mined for many centuries, and on the site of the royal palace was a mound of cinders and slag, *el Escorial* (Latin, *scoria*, dross), from which it took its name. Philip's purpose was to provide for himself and his dynasty a worthy resting-place, where prayers would be offered night and day for the repose of their souls. The royal mausoleum is inlaid with highly polished marbles and adorned with much gilding, but it is, none the less, an eerie place. All round, each in its niche, are ranged the black marble coffins of the kings of Spain, beginning with the father of the founder, and ending grimly with the empty hollows where Spanish princes now alive, or not yet born, will be laid in turn. The palace and monastery of the Escorial are dedicated to St Lawrence, and their ground-plan is said to form the outline of the instrument of his martyrdom—a gridiron. It was here that Philip received the news of the defeat of the Armada—news which he heard without uttering a word or moving a muscle of his face. It was here that he died, in a room within the sound of the chanting of the priests at the high altar. A gloomy place! And yet under the shadow of those grim walls you may see groups of merry lads playing various ball-games. They are the students of the national school of forestry which has been established in one wing of the monastery buildings. There would be ample space to house them, were they ten times as numerous, in a palace which contains 2673 windows and one hundred miles of corridors!

Almost due north of Madrid lies the ancient city of Burgos, near which is the village of Bivar, the birthplace of the Cid. The cathedral is regarded as one of the finest Gothic churches in the world, but it is not typically Spanish, having been begun by an English bishop and completed under the direction of priests from Germany. It is impossible to forget the Cid in this cold, wind-haunted, picturesque place. It was there that he wedded the beautiful Ximena, whom he loved so dearly, and

Book of Other Lands

there his dust is *believed* to lie. You may also see in Burgos a mouldering old chest which has a curious connexion with the history of the national hero. Once, when he was anxious to raise funds for one of his campaigns, the Cid filled this chest with sand, sealed it up, declared that it contained a sum of six hundred marks, and pledged it for that amount to the Jews of Burgos. Happily for his heroic reputation, the Cid redeemed his worthless pledge by repaying the loan in full ; but even so it was hardly a deed worthy of a knight. You cannot imagine Bayard doing such a thing—or Don Quixote !

Valencia is almost more the City of the Cid than even Burgos. He entered into a bond with its Moorish ruler to defend him against all his foes, both paynim and Christian, for a weekly wage of four thousand silver maravedis. In 1094, after interludes of siege and sortie, Ruy Diaz de Bivar established himself as King of Valencia, exacting heavy tribute from his trembling neighbours, and dwelling there in great splendour with Ximena and their two little daughters for five golden years. Then, in 1099, the tide turned. The Moors, under their king, Yussuf, attacked the Cid, invaded his domains, and at last made him taste the bitterness of defeat. And thereat his valiant heart broke, and he rendered up his spirit “ unto his Captain, Christ.” In his last will, the Cid did not forget his good horse, Bavieca. “ When ye bury Bavieca,” he wrote, “ dig the grave deep. Foul shame it were that he should be devoured by curs who hath in his day trampled down the currish flesh of so many Moors.” The grave *was* dug deep, between two fair trees, outside the portals of the monastery of San Pedro de Cardëna, wherein his master had already been buried. According to the old Spanish ballad (translated by Lockhart), the Cid once offered Bavieca as a free gift to King Alfonso.

But “ No ! ” said Don Alfonso, “ it were a shameful thing
That peerless Bavieca should ever be bestrid
By any mortal but Bivar,—mount, mount again, my Cid ! ”

North-east from Valencia, on a rocky spur of Montserrat, the “ saw-toothed mountain,” 4070 feet above the level of the

Spain

sea, stands a famous place of pilgrimage, the Benedictine monastery of "La Santa Imagen," the sacred image of the Virgin Mary which, according to the legend, was carved by St Luke out of a block of dark-coloured wood, and brought to Spain by St Peter.

For nearly a thousand years this weirdly jagged and cloven mountain has been the resort of pious pilgrims. Kings have knelt there, rubbing elbows with the humblest of their people. No less than nine times did the Emperor Charles V, father of Philip II, wend his way to this great monastery above the Catalan plain. There was an ancient tradition that the rocks of Montserrat



THE MONASTERY AT MONTSERRAT

were riven at the very hour that the Veil of the Temple at Jerusalem was rent—the hour when Christ "bowed His head and gave up the ghost." But the mysterious place had yet another claim upon the imagination of simple folk, since here, many of them believed, was the hiding-place of the Holy Grail. For Montserrat is the "Monsalvat" of Wagner's "Parsifal," the shrine of the sacred chalice sought by King Arthur's knights. They would seek it there in vain to-day. Neither there, nor upon any mountain of the world, is the Holy Grail

Which never eyes on earth shall see again.

CHAPTER X

SWITZERLAND

THERE was once a delightful picture in *Punch* of a little boy and girl, standing on the summit of Hampstead Heath and enjoying the view. "I do *love* Hampstead," says the little girl, "I like it *much* better than Switzerland, really." "But," objects her practical brother, "but you have never been in Switzerland." "No," returns the little girl, crushingly, "But I've seen it on the map—and I don't like the look of it *at all*."

And, indeed, Switzerland, like most mountainous countries, has anything but an attractive appearance "on the map." Those radiating masses of tiny, wrinkled lines which represent mountains give it a queer, gnarled, knobby look, and it is quite easy to understand the point of view of the little girl who preferred Hampstead Heath. Yet if that same little girl had been standing on one of the lower slopes of the Jungfrau she would probably have altered her opinion without delay. For, however unbeautiful Switzerland may look in the atlas, it is very beautiful indeed in reality. To any one who has been there, or who has seen pictures of Swiss scenery, the mere sound of the word calls up visions of silvery peaks against clear blue skies, and basking valleys, where cosy wooden houses nestle among dark pines, and contented black-and-white cows graze upon the sweet-scented wild vanilla, their bells tinkling softly as they move. The greater part of the area of Switzerland is occupied by the huge belts of folded rock, granite, limestone, and gneiss forming the ranges of the Alps and the Jura. Three rivers, the Rhine, the Rhône, and the Aar, make their way among these mighty barriers. Three languages are spoken, and many more than three races have their home, in the twenty-two cantons which form the Swiss Federation. Each of these cantons differs from the rest in costume, dialect,

Switzerland

physical geography, and local custom, and yet they have all held firmly together since the year 1499, stoutly resisting their much larger and more powerful neighbours, France, Germany, Italy, and Austria, each of whom has made various attempts at various times to swallow substantial slices of the tough little country.

The most interesting point of difference between the various cantons is the characteristic dress still worn in each. A hundred years ago these costumes were more gay and fantastic than they are anywhere to-day. Then the men sometimes donned wide-brimmed straw hats trimmed with flowers, which they wore tilted wildly over one ear, or sailor-shaped hats lined with pale green silk, while the better-class women of the Nidwald favoured a quaint headdress of white or black lace rising like an enormous cock's comb on the top of the head. The Nidwalders still have a cheerful taste in clothes. On festive occasions the man will appear in long, full, dark trousers and a dark tunic, in form like a sailor's, gaily embroidered with floral designs in bright-coloured silks. The woman's bodice and apron are similarly embroidered, her upper sleeves are of puffed white muslin, and her lower sleeves, fitting tightly from wrist to elbow, are of black lace. Round her neck she wears what we call a 'dog-collar' of silver filigree, and her bodice is adorned with two large filigree flowers, one on either side, joined by two or more silver chains festooned across the chest. These dog-collars and these bodice-ornaments are met with in practically *all* the cantons, as are also the elaborate hair-pins, of which one only is worn at a time, thrust through the plaited coils at the back of the head. The broad tops of these pins are often encased in small, tight pockets of embroidered silk, and the hair itself is entwined with coloured ribbons, or even hidden by a spiral coil of thick cord sheathed in crimson silk and transfixed by a gorgeous pin. In the Bernese Oberland the women wear chemisettes of white muslin and corslets of black velvet enlivened with filigree stars; the full skirt is usually of some light colour, pale pink or blue, sprinkled with flowers. The headdress is of black lace, rising to a peak behind, and falling in becoming frills on either side of the face.

Book of Other Lands

The men-folk of the same district are very gorgeous in black velvet jackets piped with red, the short sleeves showing the snowy shirt, and buff-coloured breeches with a bar of braid down either side. Their close-fitting skull-caps of black silk are edged with coloured embroidery and surmounted by a



BOY AND GIRL, BERNESE OBERLAND

rosette to match. Elsewhere the masculine head-gear is a felt hat with a small sprout of curled quills at the back, and the masculine leg-gear is decidedly odd, consisting of thick knitted stockings that clothe neither the feet nor the knees, but only the calves of the legs.

It has been said, and not without truth, that the chief industry of Switzerland is entertaining the visitors who descend in hordes upon that country from all parts of Europe and America. Hotels being numerous, it follows that waiters are more numerous still. And guides, to help timid people over glaciers, form a large part of the population. Two guides can get any traveller up any peak in the Alps, provided he does not suffer from giddiness; and there is a saying in Zermatt that *six* guides could get a cow up the Matterhorn! Other industries which depend for their prosperity upon tourists and travellers are the picture-postcard and cuckoo-clock industries. But Switzerland has exports as well. Many of her pretty, clean-looking cows supply milk to thousands of people who have never been anywhere near the Alps, and yet who dilute their coffee or feed their babies on Swiss milk none the less. And who has not seen the words "Made in Switzerland" printed on the paper reels round which satin ribbon is wound when it is sold? Basel (Bâle) is the centre of the ribbon-making industry, and the pretty, many-coloured

Switzerland

ribbons made in a year there would go round the equator if they were all laid end to end and stretched out. Floss-silk for fine needlework is another product of Basel. White embroidery, such as you see on babies' frocks, comes mostly from St Gall, Abbenzell, and Thurgau. Musical-boxes are made in Canton Vaud. Watches and clocks come from the Neuchâtel district of the Jura, and from Geneva. But Geneva, of course, is on the French side of the frontier, and so is Mont Blanc, though we are apt to think of both the town and the mountain as belonging to Switzerland.

It is curious to realize how the Swiss lakes and mountains are sometimes divided between Switzerland and other countries. Lake Constance, for instance, is partly German, Lac Léman (the Lake of Geneva) partly French, and Lago Maggiore partly Italian. But the lakes at Neuchâtel, Zürich, and Lucerne are entirely Swiss. Of course, lakes are always a characteristic feature in the physical geography of mountainous lands such as Scotland, Switzerland, Japan, and some parts of the United States and Canada. No European country, however, is so rich in glaciers as the Alpine Republic. Her riches in this respect are shrinking every year, but it is not long since she possessed no less than 1077 of these great belts of ice, fed by snow which falls above the summer snow-level. The largest of these is the Aletsch, nearly fifty square miles in extent, and a beautiful sight in the sunshine, with its intense, jewel-like colours, blue and green and dazzling silver-white. All glaciers are forced by the law of gravity to move slowly downhill, but their movement is imperceptible to the eye, the pace being no faster than that of the long-hand of a watch.

"Beware the awful avalanche" is often a very sound piece of advice where so many and such vast masses of snow are poised above the valleys. The rumble and roar of these descending masses can be heard for miles around. Almost more alarming, and sometimes almost as destructive, is the fearful blast of swift cold air which keeps pace with the avalanche and helps to carry everything before it. Nowadays people have become skilful in checking and diverting this

Book of Other Lands

menace by means of artificial barriers, but it still exists, and adds to the excitement of Alpine expeditions at the time of year when such incidents are most likely to occur. The forests, of course, help to stem the downward rush of snow; though they, too, sometimes suffer severely. The variety of trees is extraordinary, owing to the different sorts of climate and temperature enjoyed at different levels above the sea—levels ranging in Switzerland from 581 feet at Lago Maggiore



ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE

to 15,217 feet at Monte Rosa. In the warm, sheltered valleys vines and olives flourish; a little higher are oaks and beeches; higher still, pines and firs; and then, above their dark plumes eternal snow. Timber is exceptionally useful in a land where there are no coal-mines, where wood-carving is a profitable industry, and the trains are fed with logs instead of with large blocks of coal. Bern, the Grisons, Vaud, the Valais, and Ticino are the most thickly-wooded cantons, and their steeply-climbing forests, where each tree stands head and shoulders above the tree next below it, add much to the beauty of their lake and mountain landscapes.

One of the loveliest scenic effects that we may enjoy in the Alps is what is called the *Alpenglühn*, literally, the Alp-glow.

Switzerland

At certain hours of the day, and certain seasons of the year, the rays of the sun striking on the great peaks of snow produce a rich, rose-coloured tinge, and, as an unpoetical small boy once said, make the mountains look like masses of raspberry ice! When these glowing summits are reflected in sheets of glassy-smooth water the *Alpenglühn* is seen at its very best, and so seen is not soon forgotten.

Every one who has seen or cultivated a rock-garden is familiar with the flowers that flourish in high places—gentian, saxifrage, and edelweiss. Their names are interesting, as are most names of flowers. The first has for its godfather King Gentius of Illyria, whom the Romans conquered in the year 167 B.C., and who was the first person to discover and proclaim the tonic qualities of its root. A yellow crystalline compound called *gentianine* is still used in medicine as a digestive remedy, but it is obtained from the yellow-blossomed variety, not from the plant whose gorgeous blue blossoms are the glory of the Alpine slopes just below the snow-line. ‘Saxifrage’ comes from two Latin words, *saxum*, a stone, and *frangere*, to break, and it deserves its name, that tough, determined little plant that thrusts itself upward through the stern soil of rocky and mountainous districts. Round the edelweiss legends and romances have gathered. We are told how valiant youths dared the perils of glaciers and precipices in order to pluck one of these pale, woolly little flowers, in fulfilment of a vow, or to win a smile from some beautiful maiden. *Edel*, in German, means ‘noble,’ and it is easy to guess that *weiss* means ‘white.’ The edelweiss is very white indeed, and flaunts no brighter colours than a faint grey about the leaf and stem. It has a pretty little pussy-face, and is as soft as cotton-wool to the touch; but otherwise its only claim to renown is the fact that it chooses to grow in such remote and lofty corners—sometimes at a height of five, or even seven, thousand feet.

In mountainous countries there is usually some sort of national music which consists of long-drawn-out sounds easy to hear at a distance. Such is the weird, wailing voice of the bagpipe, heard not only in Scotland and Ireland, but in Italy,

Book of Other Lands

in the Caucasus, and in Spain. Such are the characteristic songs of the Swiss and Tyrolean mountaineers, which have a refrain called a *yodel*. The art of yodelling demands a good deal of practice, and the result is more startling than beautiful to the unaccustomed ear. The voice seems to leap up and down, as goats leap from crag to crag, the high notes and the low notes alternating with a somewhat seesaw effect. None the less it is an excellent way of singing when it is desirable that the sound should be audible far off, and something not much unlike it may sometimes be heard in the streets of London when the hawkers cry, "Log-O, any fire-log-O!" Though in Switzerland no "bagpipe sings i' the nose," the cowherds have a very large and long horn, upon which they can make a noise that does not seem unmusical—to the cows! But the soft clink of the cow-bells is the prettiest and most characteristic sound of the upland pastures in Switzerland.

Many energetic people who do not care greatly for scenery and are not keen on Alpine climbing betake themselves every year to various cheery resorts under the shadow of the Alps for the sake of the winter sports which are in full fling there, under clear, cold, blue skies, when London is shrouded in fog and gloom. Great is the dismay when the Swiss winter is unusually mild, and there is a dearth of ice and small depth of snow. Luckily this does not often happen, and skaters, ski-ers, and tobogganers may be pretty certain of having a glorious time five winters out of six. One of the best-known ice-rinks is at Mürren, where it is very good fun to watch the skaters of different nationalities and compare their methods. The Englishman affects an easy style, and likes to swoop about without apparent effort. He cuts figures of eight, and even waltzes on skates; but as a rule he is too shy to indulge in trick-skating, which demands more pose and gesture, and a more conscious grace. There he is hopelessly beaten by Frenchmen, Germans, Scandinavians, and the Swiss themselves, who have no such qualms, and flit, float, swerve, and bend in the most rhythmic and graceful manner. In ski-running also the Englishman prefers straightforward going, and eschews the great leaps with which runners of other nationalities amuse

Switzerland

themselves and thrill the spectators. The ski (pronounced *she*) is really a Swedish and not a Swiss idea, but it has been taken up with tremendous enthusiasm in Switzerland. A man on skis can venture where a man on foot would sink into the snow; he can cover the ground at a rapid pace on his six-foot-long wooden snow-shoes with their points turned up at either end. He has the aid of two ski-sticks, which look like elongated fencing-foils, when he needs it; but these are often relinquished, leaving him free to slide and run as if the skis were skates and the snow were ice both thick and smooth. In Scandinavia, as we shall see later, the ski-runner is fond of enlisting a reindeer, and being drawn swiftly along, holding on to the reins of the fleet creature. In Switzerland, where there are no reindeer, he sometimes annexes a pony. This is probably the most enjoyable, if not the most exciting, method of progressing upon skis. Quite a jolly toboggan-joint can be had on a one-man *luge* down any suitable slope of snow. But the enthusiast goes to work in a more systematic and—it must be added—a more dangerous way. The famous Cresta run at St Moritz has been the scene of some thrilling descents, at a fierce speed, by bob-sleighs with a full ‘crew.’ The fame will not soon die of a resourceful Scottish competitor who once enlisted two of the heftiest tobogganers whom he could find in the crew of his ‘bob,’ and, thanks to the superior impetus which their weight lent to it, triumphantly carried off the silver cup. The gay colours favoured by frequenters of winter sports, their striped jerseys and tasselled, fluffy caps, add much to the cheerfulness of the landscape in Switzerland, as in Scandinavia and Canada.

The more staid and even more characteristically Swiss sport of mountain-climbing is in great favour with elderly Englishmen, clergymen, professors, and men of letters. And not with serious-minded Englishmen only, for the present Pope, his Holiness Pius XI, was an intrepid and ardent mountaineer in his earlier days. Snow is much easier to climb than rock, demanding less strength of nerve and less skill. And those who do not care to climb either, and yet who want to see how the world looks from a mountain-top, can go up the

Book of Other Lands

loftiest railway in Europe, 11,000 feet high, and find themselves, when their journey is done, comfortably perched on the summit of the Jungfrau. This beautiful shining peak—its name means 'The Maiden'—has two companion-peaks, the Mönch (monk), so called from the fancied resemblance of its outline to the white cowl of a Cistercian, and the Eiger. To



CHURCH OF ST COLUMBA, ANDERMATT
The oldest church in Europe

see them you must betake yourself to Interlaken, on the river Aar, where, in a broad, reed-fringed lake called the Thunersee, the three rose-flushed Alps are gloriously reflected in the hour of the *Alpenglühn*. The Jungfrau is a difficult mountain to climb, on account of the loose masses of ice which often slide down its flanks, dashing the unlucky climber to destruction far below. Another famous peak is the Matterhorn, always easy to recognize by its sharply jagged and pointed conformation, and the brown and grey colour of the rock showing through the silver mantle of snow on the lower

slopes. Until 1865 nobody had ever succeeded in reaching the summit of the Matterhorn. It was then conquered by an English author-artist, Edward Whymper, author of a most interesting book, called *Scrambles Among the Alps*. As a fellow-Alpinist wrote at the time, "the strange mountain stood forth as a Goliath in front of the Alpine host"; but in Edward Whymper this white-locked, frowning giant found its David. The sport of mountaineering is comparatively youthful. Of course, men have climbed—or tried to climb—mountains for thousands of years. We remember Moses on Sinai, and Buddha among



AN ALPINE PASTURE ABOVE ZERMATT

226

The two peaks, the Taschhorn and the Dom, are the highest in Switzerland

Photo Donald McLeish



A SWISS PEASANT AND HER GOAT

Photo Donald McLeish

Switzerland

the grey crags of Rajagriya. But it is not yet a hundred and fifty years since a methodical and scientific series of attempts was first made to ascend the giants of the Alps—and made successfully. The pioneers had much to learn, and it was not until many fatal blunders had occurred that they were able to profit by the repeated lessons of experience. They learnt by degrees how to distinguish between snow that was safely solid, and snow that treacherously masked a deep crevasse; they learned how to use the alpenstock—the climber's long, sharp staff—and the ice-axe, with which to hew steps in a solid wall of ice. An ingenious person finally thought of fixing the axe to the blunt end of the staff, and thereby lightened the load which every mountaineer must bear on his upward way. Another valuable lesson was mastered when men found that by roping themselves together they could avoid many of the dangers that menaced them. If *one* of three or four should fall into a crevasse, or miss his footing on a sheer wall of rock, the chances are that the others will be able to haul him to safety again. It has sometimes happened that all *but* one of a company of climbers fell in this way, so that the unfortunate fellow left alone could do nothing but dig himself in with his ice-axe, pull hard against the dragging load tied round his waist, and pray for help to come. By severing the rope he could, of course, save himself at the cost of his companions' lives; but few men have done this, and many have risked—and some have suffered—death rather than do it. On the other hand, a fallen climber who feared that he might drag his friends with him has often been known to pluckily cut the cord binding him to them, thus surrendering his one hope of rescue, and deliberately laying down his life for others.

Now let us return to Mr Edward Whymper, whom we left at the foot of the Matterhorn in the year 1865. He had made several vain attempts to reach the summit, and, undaunted by failure, was determined to make *one* more. Instead of starting from the Italian side, as he had done more than once before, he set out from Zermatt, accompanied by three guides—a father and son called Tangwalder, and a well-known character whose

Book of Other Lands

name was Michel-Auguste Croz—and three fellow-mountaineers, Lord Francis Douglas, the Rev. Charles Hudson, and a young Englishman, Mr Hadow.

What made their adventure more exciting was their knowledge that another party, led by a guide called Carrel, had started from Breuil, on the Italian side, a few days earlier, and might have reached the unconquered peak first ! They scaled the steep, rocky, northern flank and reached an alarming wall of rock which is climbed nowadays with the aid of a fixed chain. As there was no chain to help them then, they had to skirt this difficult patch and work their way round an awkward slope, filmed with thin ice, overhanging the Swiss (Zermatt) side of the mountain. After they had got round this corner, they were thrilled to see that only 200 feet of easy-looking snow lay between themselves and their goal. Still, they could not be sure that Carrel's party had not beaten them, even then. As they neared the summit, Mr Whymper and Michel-Auguste Croz became impatient, and, freeing themselves from the rope, ran a neck-and-neck race to the top. Not a footstep could they see on the snow ! And then, peeping over the cliff, they caught sight of Carrel and his companions 1250 feet below. The victorious seven remained for about an hour on the crest of the Matterhorn, and then began the far more risky and difficult task of getting down again. Most unfortunately young Hadow, the least experienced of Whymper's party, slipped and knocked over Croz, who was helping him ; they both fell, dragging Lord Francis Douglas and Mr Hudson with them. Mr Whymper and the elder Tangwalder braced themselves to bear the sudden jerk and plunge of the rope, hoping that they might be able to drag the falling forms to safety. But the rope was not equal to the strain ; it frayed and broke, and the four ill-fated adventurers crashed down from precipice to precipice until they lay lifeless on the Matterhorn glacier 4000 feet below. It needed all Mr Whymper's coolness and courage to complete the descent, as his two guides were utterly unnerved by the disaster.

Three days later he set out, early on a Sunday morning, with a group of guides from Chamonix and the Oberland (the Zer-

Switzerland

matt guides had to go to early Mass, and could not accompany them), in quest of the place where the victims lay. Whympers own words shall complete the pitiful story—"As we saw one weather-beaten man after another raise the telescope, turn deadly pale, and pass it on without a word to the next, we knew that all hope was gone."

Another famous mountain—or, rather, group of mountains—is Pilatus, which rises to a height of 6995 feet to the south-west of Lucerne. Till the fifteenth century these stark and sombre crags were known as the *Mons Fractus*, the broken mountain; but in that century we begin to meet with the queer legend that in a gloomy little lake in one of its gorges the body of Pontius Pilate found a

resting-place. The Tiber, the Rhône, and the Lake of Geneva, it was said, had refused in turn to receive the mortal remains of the one-time Procurator of Judæa. When the dark clouds gathered round the fierce brows of the Mons Fractus, the superstitious peasants whispered that it was the unquiet soul of Pontius Pilate which had drawn them thither.

At Lucerne is the celebrated lion-monument, carved out of the living rock by the Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen. This lion commemorates the devotion of Louis XVI's Swiss Guard, who were butchered by the French revolutionaries and fell, almost to a man, in defence of their unfortunate master. Owing to Switzerland's peculiar position as a neutral country, and the limited choice of careers open to her sons, many Swiss have



THE TRAGEDY OF THE MATTERHORN

Book of Other Lands

found employment in other lands at various times, as bodyguards to pontiffs and princes, and as beadles and guides in cathedrals. The Pope has a Swiss Guard to this day, and it will be remembered that Hamlet's sly, smiling uncle called out, in a moment of alarm, "Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door." The gorgeous gold-braided personage who shows you the beauties of a French cathedral is most probably a Frenchman, but if you want to ask where he is, you must say, "*Où est le Suisse ?*"

In olden times the Alps formed a formidable barrier between France and Italy, and the traveller who shirked a long, trying journey, "tossing on the deep blue sea," had to face an almost more nerve-racking experience when he was partly pushed, partly carried, and partly jolted over some snowy buttress. Two of the best-known tunnels in the world have been cut through Swiss mountain-ranges, one at Simplon and one at St Gothard. The former, connecting Brig in Switzerland with Iselle in Italy, is the longest yet made in Europe. For more than twelve miles it thrusts its way through a vast mass of mica, limestone, and gneiss. You must spend fifteen to twenty minutes in its depths, crossing the Swiss-Italian frontier about half-way through, and having at one moment no less than 7000 feet of mountain over your head! The St Gothard, between Göschenen and the Italian-Swiss canton of Ticino, is nine miles long, and runs through granite, a harder rock than limestone for the tunnellers to tackle. More celebrated in song and story than either of these great natural barriers is Mont St Bernard, dividing Valais and Piedmont, and standing astride the frontier-line between France, Switzerland and Italy. Here, at a height of 8110 feet above the sea-level, in a bleak region of deep snows and fierce tempests, the monks of the Order of St Augustine have kept a hospice for pilgrims and wayfarers ever since the year 970. Here were first bred those brave and sagacious hounds whose task it was—and still is—to rescue travellers lost in the snow. For nine months of the year the hospice is surrounded by snow, and the temperature is as low as it is upon the southern flank of Spitzbergen; but in July, August, and September, the white

Switzerland

mantle shrinks, and the thick film of ice upon the little lake melts away, and a few timid pansies and forget-me-nots open their eyes. This is the season when tourists visit the good monks. Queen Victoria stayed there once, and sent her hosts a portrait of herself as a souvenir ; her son, King Edward VII, also found his way thither, and *his* gift to the hospitable Augustinians was a grand piano ! Until quite recently *any* traveller was entertained for one night free of charge, all that



OX-CART IN THE ENGADINE

was expected of him at his departure being a small sum dropped into a money-box by the door. But visitors have grown more and more numerous, the price of food and fuel has mounted high, and generosity has failed to keep pace with this double increase. So the monks now make a small fixed charge to such as can afford to pay. Wood-cutters, pedlars, Italian stonemasons homeward bound, and—it must be added—smugglers engaged in the contraband tobacco traffic, are fed and lodged free, as before. Sometimes it may even happen that smugglers and custom-house officers will sit down amicably to supper side-by-side on the ‘neutral ground’ of

Book of Other Lands

the St Bernard Hospice ! The difficulties, and the devotion, of the monks will be better appreciated if it be remembered that everything for the use of themselves and their guests, fresh water, provisions, fuel, and oil, has to be brought upon mule-back from the valley far below. Dickens, in *Little Dorrit*, has described the scene—" A craggy track, up which the mules

in single file scrambled and turned from block to block, as though they were ascending the broken staircase of a gigantic ruin, was their way now. No trees were to be seen, nor any vegetable growth, save a poor, brown, scrubby moss freezing in the chinks of the rock. Blackened skeleton arms of wood by the wayside pointed upward to the convent, as if the ghosts of former travellers overwhelmed by the snow haunted the scene of their distress. . . . never-resting wreaths and mazes of mist wandered



THE PRIOR OF ST BERNARD'S HOSPICE AND DOG

about, hunted by a moaning wind ; and snow, the besetting danger of the mountain, against which all its defences were taken, drifted sharply down."

The old-fashioned St Bernard dog, a cross between a Pyrenean sheep-dog and a Newfoundland, has lately been replaced by the smaller and more stoutly built Würtemberger hounds, who have shorter and rougher coats, and are less inclined to " go at the knees " than the big, furry, shambling St Bernards.



THE MATTERHORN

Photo Donald McLeish



JUMPING A CREVASSE IN THE ALPS

Photo Donald McLeish

Switzerland

These hounds are marvellously intelligent. Even when the "skeleton arms of wood" which Dickens describes are buried in snow, or shrouded in mist, they can make their way back to the Hospice, and monks and travellers follow confidently where they lead.

Two legendary figures, famous in poetry and romance, belong to the Switzerland of the Middle Ages—Tell and Bonivard. Tell is the more picturesque, though he is also the more dim and shadowy of the two. Bonivard was quite a solid person who wrote quite a solid book; but it seems not unlikely that William Tell was as much the creation of a popular tradition as Robin Hood or Herne the Hunter. According to this popular tradition, Tell was born at Burglen, in Uri, toward the close of the thirteenth century. In 1307, Albert II of Austria was endeavouring to impose the Austrian yoke upon the Forest Cantons, and his steward, Gessler, forced the Swiss to bow down before Albert's ducal hat set upon a pole in the town of Altdorf. This Tell proudly refused to do, and Gessler condemned him, as a punishment, to shoot at an apple set upon the head of his little son. Tell was as skilful an archer as Robin Hood himself. His son stood unflinching, and the arrow transfixed the apple. When this feat was accomplished, a second arrow fell from the folds of the archer's tunic. Gessler asked him its purpose. "It was for thee, tyrant," said Tell, "if my first shaft had missed the target." Other stirring incidents followed in rapid succession. Tell *did* slay Gessler. And thus began the great popular movement which won independence for Switzerland. Learned professors and stern historians say that Tell is only a myth. But it would be neither polite nor tactful to quote their opinion too freely in Altdorf to-day, for a fine statue of the hero stands in the market-place there, and the play which was woven round the story by the German poet Schiller is frequently performed in a theatre built specially for that purpose. The same story also inspired the Italian composer Rossini to write an opera, of which the overture is often heard at orchestral concerts in many lands.

François Bonivard was, of course, that Prisoner of Chillon round whose sufferings Byron wove the famous poem of that

Book of Other Lands

name. The castle stands at the eastern extremity of Lac Léman, between Villeneuve and Montreux, not far from the point where the lake receives the waters of the river Rhône. Its ruddy-brown, steeply peaked roofs rise between the verge of the lake and a high cliff shagged with thick trees ; from its windows of fine stone-tracery you look upon the Alpine range of St Gingulph, while on the other side are the pine-trees, and gleaming white houses and thin, pointed belfries of Chexbres and Vevey. The stubborn outer-walls were built in the



THE CASTLE OF CHILLON

eleventh century, as a stronghold for the warlike Counts of Savoy, the ancestors of the Italian Royal Family of the present day. The Counts became Dukes, and their frowning fortress became a beautiful castle, with vaulted and painted roofs, richly carven columns, and inner walls bright with fresco pictures. The records of the household at Chillon begin as early as 1257, but the finest part of the building, the *camera domini*, the personal apartments of its lord, and the chapel, were added in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its towers and courts are embowered in a dense growth of trees, rose-bushes, jessamine, and flowering creepers. Under the windows of the camera domini runs the old highroad to Italy, once trodden by the pious feet of hordes of pilgrims bound for Rome. Some of these wayfarers had a pleasant surprise some-

Switzerland

times, when one of the lords of Chillon happened to look out of his window in a benevolent mood, and sent his steward to invite them to halt and refresh themselves at the castle before they continued their weary march. It is improbable that their dusty feet were ever permitted to ascend to the lordly apartment whence the Count of Savoy had looked down on the pilgrims' road. According to mediæval ideas, it was a very lordly apartment indeed. The great wooden beams of the roof were painted all over with the Arms of the House of Savoy, a white cross on a crimson ground. You can still see this dazzling mass of dim crosses on the faded crimson, and traces of the frescoes that once beautified the walls. They must have loved flowers, the proud feudal chieftains who spent their few hours of repose in this room.

Red and white roses climb round the place where their four-post bedstead once stood, strawberries in blossom and in fruit, and little buds, yellow, scarlet and blue, bestar the mimic turf. Larger pictures, higher up on the wall, represent forest scenes, with leopards, bears, and dromedaries disporting themselves among prim-looking trees.

Far below this cheerful room

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeon deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left.

At Geneva you may still see the two-storied, wooden-shuttered house where Byron stayed when he visited this lovely part of the world in 1816. The poet was himself in a bitterly rebellious frame of mind, and very ready to flare up in fiery sympathy with the woes of other rebellious and unfortunate people. So when he stood in "Chillon's dungeon deep and old," and counted the "seven pillars of Gothic mould," and heard the waters of the lake lapping softly above his head, he was swiftly inspired to write his famous but far from accurate poem. The *real* Bonivard seems to have been

Book of Other Lands

a rather tiresome person, and a study of his history leaves us with a sense that perhaps there was something to be said on behalf of the Duke of Savoy who threw him (but *not*, as in the poem, his brothers) into prison !

Although Switzerland has produced no great writer or painter, the country is rich in literary and artistic associations. At Lausanne, the podgy, persevering historian, Edward Gibbon, wrote his monumental work, the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Dickens wrote *Dombey and Son*. At Ferney, on the Lake of Geneva, Voltaire, one of the most brilliant Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, an impish wisp of a man who reminds us in many ways of Alexander Pope, spent his last years and graciously received the admiring visitors who gathered there from all parts of Europe. At Basel, the capital of the Republic, Hans Holbein, the Court painter of Henry VIII, lived for several years. This ancient city, founded by the Emperor Valentinian in 374, was the last home of one of Holbein's most interesting sitters, the witty and learned Erasmus. Under the shadow of its great red sandstone cathedral he spent the closing days of his long life. People did not then appreciate the beauty of mountain scenery. Perhaps when he gazed at the huge silver peaks looming over Basel, Erasmus may have thought a little wistfully of the pleasant green meadows of Chelsea where he had spent so many happy hours with his English friend, Sir Thomas More.

CHAPTER XI

HOLLAND AND BELGIUM

IT is beyond doubt that the best way to approach a strange land is from the sea. The traveller feels no thrill as he crosses the frontier between two continental states ; often he is calmly unaware that he *has* crossed it. But his sensations are very different when he catches sight of a faint blur beyond a great expanse of water, and when it gradually reveals the form and colour of a Vesuvius or a Table Mountain, the Peak at Hong Kong, or the white cliffs of Kent. Yet another sort of sensation is his when he peers ahead and sees tiny pointed roofs apparently sprouting from the waves rather low on the horizon. That is what happens as he approaches Holland and Belgium, two countries so quaintly flat that they look as if they lay below the sea-level—which in some places they actually *do*.

Dutch artists have always loved to paint Dutch landscapes ; and as there are many of their masterpieces in the picture-galleries of England and America, thousands of people who have never set foot in Holland know almost exactly what it looks like. Most of these charming, cool, and tranquil scenes were painted three hundred years ago, but the reality has altered so little that the resemblance between the two remains all but perfect. The avenues, the canals, the bright, steep-roofed houses, the white-capped, bunchy-skirted women, are much as they were when Hobbema and de Hooch and Vermeer lived and worked among them.

Acre by acre the dauntless Dutch have reclaimed their land from the hungry foam of the North Sea, and it is only with the aid of stout dykes that they are able even now to keep their old foe at bay. Every one has heard the story—a true one—of the heroic Dutch boy who plugged a hole in one of these dykes with his finger, and nearly died of cold, in the

Book of Other Lands

endeavour to hold out the water and save a whole province from being overwhelmed. And every one who has read Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (a most exciting book, despite its rather 'stodgy' title) will remember that in the course of their fierce struggle against Philip II of Spain in the sixteenth century the Netherlanders, as they were then called, sometimes opened the dykes themselves, and submerged great tracts of country then in the grip of the Spaniard. Now they have reversed that process with a vengeance, for they are actually reclaiming the Zuider Zee, and hope some day to see 500,000 acres of good soil there, and all its islands linked up with dry land.

Owing to the excessive flatness of the land, you see more of the sky in Holland than in almost any other country in the world. No rising ground, no distant mountain-ranges, no cities built upon hills, interrupt your view. Sometimes the result is perfectly enchanting, as when you see a leaden bank of thunder-clouds away to the south, while a huge, glowing rainbow seems to spring straight from the red roofs of a little white village far off in the north, and westward the sky opens out into an arch of pale blue, softly filmed with silver cloud. Some artists betake themselves to Holland for no other purpose than to revel in the lovely sky-effects, and the lovely, cool, clear light that shows up the colours of the meadows and the houses with just that charm that you see in the landscapes of the great Dutch painters of long ago.

No people in the world are so neat and clean as the people of this flat, fascinating little patch of country on the grey margin of the North Sea.

Everything there, themselves included, seems to have been scrubbed and scoured and polished to the highest possible degree. The windows glitter, the very nails in the doors sparkle, the woodwork gets a coat of fresh green paint at least once a year, the doorsteps are like snowdrifts, the window-curtains are like snow. Nothing is allowed to be untidy, grimy, or dim. Indeed, the Dutch will not tolerate even that sort of wildness and irregularity which some people might call romantic or picturesque. Their trees are planted in



A WOMAN OF HINDELOOPEN, FRIESLAND, WEARING THE HISTORIC
COSTUME OF HER VILLAGE

238

This is still worn on Sundays and on festival days

Photo Donald McLeish



AMSTERDAM FROM THE AIR

Photo Royal Dutch Air Service

Holland and Belgium

avenues as straight as their canals, and are polled and clipped and shorn so that not a branch is out of place; their flowers also are bedded out in prim and regular rows.

It will be a dreadful pity if the Dutch ever abandon altogether their quaint and delightful national costume, which adds so much to the character and the beauty of their native land. To the traveller fresh from the dingy and monotonous dress of England, or Belgium, or the larger towns of France, it is a glorious shock to see a Dutch girl coming along, with her bunchy skirts, her short sleeves, her dazzling white cap. The costume varies a little in different parts of Holland, and is to be seen in its greatest perfection on the island of Marken, near Edam. There the men are as striking as the women, and there you will see those tremendous baggy trousers and those huge wooden shoes in which Dutchmen are always seen on the stage, on calendars, and on Christmas cards. They live in houses built over poles driven into the moist earth, and the interiors of such houses are very pretty, with their yellow-painted walls on which hang plates of blue-and-white Delft pottery.

In the province of Friesland the women and girls wear close-fitting head-coverings, like helmets, of gold and silver, and, over these, caps of white lace; in other provinces gold and silver ornaments, in form rather like large bobbins or reels of cotton, are often stuck in front of the ears, or used to



A GIRL OF ARNHEM

However poor, these girls always wear a pair of curious corkscrew ornaments of gold fastened to a gold band on each side of the stiffly-starched cap

Book of Other Lands

keep the cap in position. The form of the cap itself varies very much, being sometimes peaked at the back, sometimes adorned with pointed flaps turning backward on either side of the face, and sometimes ruched round the forehead. It may fit closely to the head, or rise above the top of the skull at the back. Wooden shoes are almost universally worn out of doors by the poorer people, and, as even the country roads are paved in the centre with rather bumpy stones, this is a very wise custom.

The Dutch enjoy the good things of this life in their quiet, steady way. Though they are not such clever cooks as the French, they have invented some excellent dishes, such as chicken or game served with hot stewed apricots, and duckling with a sauce made of sweetened prunes. And, of course, they have their incomparable cheeses! Though the Dutchman of the stage and the Christmas card usually clutches a large and long pipe, this tobacco-loving nation prefers to smoke cigars, huge cigars, often made from tobacco grown in the Dutch East Indies. Quite small boys are often to be seen puffing away at cigars almost as big as themselves, and the astonishment of a stranger may be imagined when he is stopped and asked for a light by a smoker whose head does not come up to his elbow.

Nobody who has seen a Dutch landscape, either in reality or in a picture-frame, would be surprised at the number of canals which intersect the flat green meadows where the cows graze so stolidly, or at the frequency with which the windmills appear. Oddly enough, these windmills have quite different duties from those which one would expect. They do not, as the old mills of England and France used to do, grind grain and turn it into flour. Instead they saw wood, pump water, cut tobacco into strips, and 'lend a hand' in the manufacture of paper.

In summer-time the Dutch have a placid, almost a sleepy, air. The men have often fine, strongly marked features of the Julius Cæsar type, their resemblance to the great Roman being accentuated by the fact that beards and moustaches are hardly ever grown; the women are usually pretty, in a



FISHERMEN OF THE ZUIDER ZEE

Photo Donald McLeis!

Holland and Belgium

plump, solid way, and have fresh, rosy cheeks which speak well for the health-giving qualities of the milk, butter, and cheese that is their chief food. However placid they may both be in warm weather, everything is changed with the first snap of frost, and whenever the ice on the Zuider Zee and the canals is strong enough to 'bear,' the same people who sat about so drowsily, or stumped about so heavily, in the summer go swooping and flitting about on skates as swiftly and as gracefully as swallows flying over a pool. Children learn to skate almost as soon as they learn to walk; but the very tiny ones are often pushed over the ice in a sort of chair on runners. What *will* they do, poor dears, when the Zuider Zee is drained and dyked?

Scattered about this green, willow-tufted land there are beautiful old cities which bear a strong family resemblance to each other. In each you will find fine houses of the true Dutch type, with those gable roofs so indented on either side that it seems as though the architect had intended to make two flights of steps meeting on the very top. You will find a beautiful Gothic church, ruthlessly whitewashed inside and shorn of all its ancient ornaments, but probably containing the tomb of one of those valiant Dutch admirals who made their country a great naval power in the seventeenth century. You will see masts and sails in the most unexpected places, where the canals cut through the houses, and rows of flourishing tall trees planted at equal distances to form a sort of screen between the riverside mansions and the water in which it is amusing to see their distinct reflections upside down. In the larger towns, such as Amsterdam and The Hague, there are picture-galleries and museums to be seen, or a royal palace, or a beautiful park. But one of the *most* beautiful and most famous sights of Holland is the expanse of tulips at Haarlem in the spring. Of course, all sorts of bulbs are cultivated, of which an enormous number find their way into the fibre-filled bowls, the window-boxes and the garden-beds of flower-lovers in England—curly hyacinths, fluttering narcissi, golden jonquils and daffodils, glowing gladioli, graceful lilies. But the tulip always seems to reign as queen over all the rest,

Book of Other Lands

partly because it was in Holland that it was first cultivated on a large scale and brought to its highest beauty.

The tulip is really a native of Persia, but by the end of the sixteenth century it had spread as far east as India and as far west as the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, the Levant. You see it among the carved flowers inlaid with precious stones round the tomb of Shah Jehan's beloved wife at Agra,¹ and it



AN OLD FORTIFIED GATEWAY IN
MAASTRICHT

was from the Levant that both the tulip and its name were brought to Europe by a French traveller in the age of the Valois and the later Tudors. The Turks had dubbed the flower "*tulbend*," a turban, because they fancied that they could see in its folded petals some resemblance to the characteristic head-gear of a True Believer; and in one form or another this Turkish word survives in almost every European language as the name of that flower. The tulip lacks only one charm. It is practically devoid of perfume. But for form and colour few flowers are so lovely. Skilful gardeners seem to have been

able to weave every tint of the sunset into its silken petals. And foremost among those gardeners were those who worked and experimented in Holland during the second half of the seventeenth century. After a time the news of their efforts, and of the successes which they had won, spread all over Europe, and what has come to be called the Tulip Fever arose. Fabulous sums of money were offered for rare varieties. Foolish people began to speculate in tulips as modern business

¹ See Chapter III of the present work.

Holland and Belgium

men speculate in oil and rubber shares, without seeing any more of the tulip-fields than those business men in London or New York see of the oil-wells of Persia or the rubber-plantations of the Malay Peninsula. Fortunes were lost or gained over a solitary bulb. All this was very ridiculous. It did not mean that people were learning to love flowers any better, but only that they thought they had discovered a new way of making much money without much trouble. In the meantime the Dutch gardeners persevered, many of them from unselfish enthusiasm, others, in order to win the prizes offered by various cities for new and rare specimens, and others, no doubt, with one eye on the surging bulb-market in other lands.

In Alexandre Dumas's romance *La Tulipe Noire* there is a most delightful picture of the Dutch town of Dort in the year 1672, and a thrilling account of the feverish efforts of two rival tulip-fanciers to produce the Black Tulip and thus to win the prize of a hundred thousand guilders offered by the Horticultural Society of Haarlem. These two, Cornelius Van Baerle the hero, and Isaac Boxtel the villain, of the tale, lived next door to each other and were thus able to watch each other's progress over the intervening wall. We are told that Boxtel, ensconced in a sycamore tree, watched his neighbour "with eyes starting from their sockets," and that whenever he saw a smile of pleasure on the lips of Van Baerle he poured out such a stream of threats and curses—which, of course, the other could not hear—that it was a wonder the breath of his malice did not blight the tulips on the spot. Boxtel became so furious when he saw how well Van Baerle was prospering that he even stooped so low as to drop two cats, tied together by the hindleg, on to the tulip-bed one night, so that in their struggles they should scratch up the precious bulbs and damage them beyond repair. It is a great relief to learn at the end of the story that all his plots were brought to nought, and that the prize was duly awarded to Van Baerle; whereupon Boxtel fell dead with vexation, and that was the end of *him*.

It is curious to find that, though tulips and other lovely flowers of the same family are cultivated in dazzling abundance round about the quaint old town of Haarlem, there are no

Book of Other Lands

pretty little gardens in front of the cottages, such as there are in every village in England and Scotland. The small, sparkling white houses rise straight out of the cobbled street. This is the case in Belgium also, and to eyes accustomed to the plots of hollyhocks, sunflowers, dahlias, and sweet-williams that border such streets on the other side of the Channel, the first impression cannot fail to be a little bleak and dreary.

Passing along the double row of snow-white dwellings, one is almost sure to come soon to a queer wee shop over which swings a sign called the *gaper*. He is called a 'gaper' because he is a gaper, this big, beaming mask. And if you happen to want some cough lozenges, or some quinine, or some camphorated oil for a cold, you will hail him with joy, for he tells you that the proprietor of the shop is a chemist. Another important person is the cow-doctor, upon whose bright green front door is an even brighter brass slab to tell the anxious owners of ailing cows where they may seek advice. Cows loom large in this land of butter and cheese. The most favoured are the Frisians, big, gentle beasts with black-and-white coats, of whom you see countless thousands quietly munching in the meadows. No one is allowed to be lazy in Holland who can possibly be persuaded to work. Even the dog has his task, which is to help to pull little carts along the flat, bumpy roads. A pair of strong, willing dogs will rattle along with their master sitting in the cart, and a load of vegetables, or milk-cans, or loaves of bread as well, every bit as cheerily as the London coster's donkey rattles through the streets of London.

The most exciting event in the yearly round of a Dutch village is the Fair, or kermess, which Dutch artists like Ostade and Teniers loved to paint. Then barges bearing tents and booths and merry-go-rounds make their way along the canals, and discharge their cargo at some likely spot, to the tremendous excitement of all the children for a mile round. Targets are set up for archery, courses are marked out for races, and whole families prepare to cram themselves with *poffertjes*, small cakes, like pancakes, spread with butter and sugar, and *wafelen*, the cousins of the 'waffles' so well known in Australia and the United States.



A GIRLS' SCHOOL IN HOLLAND

Photo Donald McLeish



THE GRANDE PLACE, BRUSSELS

245

Note the richly decorated guild-houses. The top of one suggests the stem of a medieval ship. This is the Hall of the Shippers

Photo Donald McLeish

Holland and Belgium

The charming old town of Kampen, with its quaint clock-tower, its impressive Town Hall with the statues of Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, Moderation, Fidelity, Justice, and Brotherly Love arranged in a row outside, has the same sort of proverbial renown as Gotham, whence the three "wise" men put to sea in a bowl. The Elders of Kampen did not put to 'sea' at all, though many of their fellow-townsmen did so every day, in order to fish in the *Zuider Zee*; no, they stayed on shore, and passed a resolution that the municipal sundial should be put under cover, in order to protect it from the rays of the sun! Another time they had an extremely happy thought. It was reported to the Town Council that each of the seven gates of the town produced a revenue of ten million florins a year, collected in tolls from merchants and travellers. The sages of Kampen therefore decided to double the number of gates, so that they could collect double the number of florins!

The Hague is, perhaps, less interesting in some ways than some of the smaller towns where there is more colour and movement. But in the neighbourhood of that quiet, sedate capital is a beautiful wood, in which the most delightful path is called the Philosophers' Lane, and in The Hague itself is a picture-gallery, the Mauritshuis, where some of the best of the Dutch Old Masters that still remain in Holland may be studied. Here is the celebrated picture called "The Anatomy Lesson," in which the artist Rembrandt's friend, Nicolas Tulp, is seen demonstrating how the muscles of the left hand work, while a group of Dutch doctors sit round, some of them interested in the lesson, while others seem, on the whole, more concerned with the beauty of their dark cloaks and huge snowy collars. A less powerful but perhaps more charming painting in the Mauritshuis is Jan Steen's "Menagerie." It is rather difficult to understand why that name, which suggests a collection of lions, tigers, and giraffes, should have been given to a scene in which the only animals that appear, with the exception of a puppy and a lamb, belong to the feathered tribe. But what a lot of them there are! A peacock perches on a tree-stump, ducks paddle in a pond, pigeons, turkeys, geese, cocks and hens,

Book of Other Lands

strut and waddle. In the centre sits a fascinating little girl, grave, gentle and demure, feeding her pet lamb out of a bowl.

There was a time when Holland was a great sea-power, the rival of Spain and Portugal, the doughty antagonist of England, when Rotterdam was one of the centres of the vast trade which grew up between Europe and the Indies after the voyages of the sixteenth-century seamen had unveiled the New World to the Old, and when it seemed as if a greatness

so solidly founded must surely endure. It has not endured. But Holland had *another* glory which nothing can take away from her—the glory of having produced a school of painting which holds in northern Europe the same supreme place that the Italians hold in the South. This artistic movement really began in the fifteenth century, when Holland and Belgium were practically one country, and both formed part of the domains of the Duke of Burgundy.



A LITTLE GIRL OF MARKEN

When we cross the Belgian frontier and reach Bruges and Ghent we shall see the beginnings of that great awakening; but in Holland we see, in the paintings of Rembrandt, Hobbema, Ruysdael, de Hooch, Franz Hals, and many other masters, the result and the fulfilment of the splendid promise. Rembrandt, the son of a miller of Leyden, is the most powerful of these painters, but some people like the bluff and genial Franz Hals better. There is a sort of golden gloom in Rembrandt's pictures, and often more strength than beauty; whereas the canvas of Hals bubbles with life and colour. Who does not know his jolly, rosy-cheeked, conceited "Laughing Cavalier"?

Holland and Belgium

The Dutchmen of Rembrandt's time must have been exceedingly fond of having their portraits painted in groups, for a large number of such portraits still exists. The governors of hospitals, the heads of trade guilds, the members of shooting clubs, all used to join forces and be immortalized in a bunch. In the year 1642 a company of Amsterdam arquebusiers decided to have themselves painted by Rembrandt. Each paid the artist a sum of one hundred florins; but one square inch of the canvas is now worth ten times as much. This is the picture which has come to be—quite mistakenly—called the "Night Watch." Actually, the gallant arquebusiers are emerging from a rather shadowy vaulted hall, and the light from an unseen window high up to the left of the spectator falls intensely upon the faces of those in the foreground. Franz Banning Cock, the captain, a fine-looking fellow with a broad-brimmed beaver hat and a vast white collar, is in animated conversation with his lieutenant, Willem van Ruitenberg, a little man in a buff leather coat, who bears an odd resemblance to Charles I of England, and is stepping out for all he is worth to keep pace with the longer legs of his commanding officer. The other officers, in a variety of high-crowned hats and pointed helmets, have managed to get well into the frame without being packed too tightly, and the drummer on the right is plying his sticks with such goodwill that one can almost hear the throb of the drum.

When the traveller crosses the frontier between Holland and Belgium his first feeling will be one of regret for the quaint costumes he has left behind. The Belgians have no national dress, and though the people are clean and tidy, they seem a dingy throng after the decorative Dutch, and children in black cotton pinafores do not add to the cheerfulness of the cobbled village streets. At Terneuzen, one of the last Dutch towns before you wend your way into East Flanders, there is a particularly pretty type of dress, worn by particularly pretty girls. The sleeves of the bodices are stiffened with whalebone or wire so that they rise on either side of the head like pointed wings; the fabric is some sort of cretonne, sprinkled with coloured flowers on a black background; and the effect, with

Book of Other Lands

the close-fitting snowy caps, the glinting gold cap-ornaments, the bunchy skirts, and the chemisette and short under sleeves of white muslin, is quite charming. After leaving the winged damsels of Terneuzen behind, it is quite disappointing to see the Belgian girls capless and wingless and wearing plain dark frocks.

Until the year 1831 Belgium was not a separate country, with a king of her very own. The name then given to the new realm was that of a warlike tribe, the Belgæ, of whose prowess



A MILK CART

Julius Cæsar wrote in his record of the Gallic wars, and the first king was Queen Victoria's "dear Uncle Leopold."

The differences between the landscape on the Dutch and on the Belgian side of the Belgian frontier are not, at first, very many or very remarkable. In Flanders you find the same long, straight avenues paved in the centre, the same oozy canals, the same windmills, though rather less numerous, and the same whitewashed villages scattered among flat green meadows. Weaving and spinning were the chief industries of the land in the old days, and it was a Flemish queen, Margaret, the wife of James II of Scotland, who taught the art of linen-making to the people of Fife—an art in which they excel to this day. Flax (*lin*) is one of the most important crops raised

Holland and Belgium

in Flanders. Toward the end of July you will see, here and there in the fields, wooden frames with upstanding teeth, like gigantic combs. On either side sit girls with bunches of green flax in their hands. These they draw through the comb, so that the berry-shaped seeds are nipped off between the teeth—those useful ‘berries’ from which linseed poultices and linseed-oil are made. The flax, after being thus stripped of seed, is buried in shallow trenches, and left there to moulder until nothing but the fibres is left. From these fibres linen is manufactured. Carts drawn by dogs are an even more frequent incident in the Flemish than in the Dutch roads, and by way of variety you will encounter a larger cart now and then, to which is harnessed a large white cow. The countryside has its own quiet charm, but an English traveller will miss the lanes, the deep, steep, dipping and curving lanes of England, with their flowering hedgerows, their overhanging trees, and their borders so richly embroidered with many-hued wildflowers.

The capital of East Flanders is the ancient city of Ghent, the ‘Gaunt’ whence John of Gaunt took his name. Its citizens, mostly weavers by trade, were in the Middle Ages a wealthy and powerful community, from whom their liege lord the Duke of Burgundy had no small difficulty in exacting the taxes which *he* considered quite reasonable and *they* considered excessive. The Ghenters were warlike as well as stubborn, and could wield a pike or a crossbow with the best when their belfries sounded the call to arms. It was indeed their valour which won the Battle of Spurs at Courtrai, in 1302, when no less than seven hundred golden spurs were gleaned from the battlefield after the victory. So rich and so magnificent was the city in the sixteenth century that the Emperor Charles V, who had been born there, said punningly to François I of France, “*Je mettrais Paris dans mon Gant*” (my Ghent—my glove). To-day one of its most pleasing industries is not weaving, but the baking of a delicious sort of spiced honey-cake known as *pain d’épice*.

The two chief glories of Ghent are the Château des Comtes, a twelfth-century fortress, the towers of which rise from a moat whose waters come from the river Lys, and the cathedral of

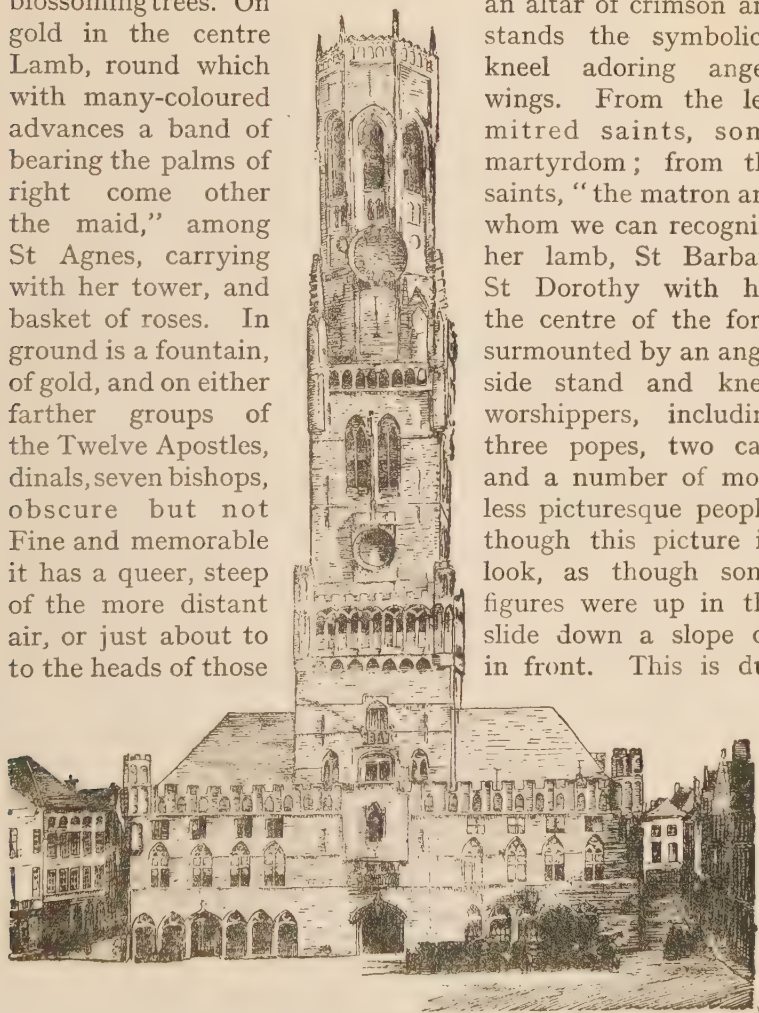
Book of Other Lands

St Bavon. In the castle kings and queens (including our own Edward III and Philippa of Hainault) have held festival, and Dukes of Burgundy, more puissant than most monarchs of their time, have reigned in gorgeous splendour. Here the Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece used to feast by torch-light in the great banqueting-hall. And here, in the dungeons whose dark walls date from the close of the Dark Ages, grim deeds were done, cruel tortures were applied, and the bones of unfortunate captives were thrust beneath the pavement. So gorgeously mediæval is this fortress, one would feel hardly any surprise if a procession of knights in armour and heralds bearing banners were suddenly to emerge from the shadow of its towered walls.

The cathedral of St Bavon is the handiwork of several different epochs, one generation having carried on what another had begun, or rebuilt what another had destroyed. The first impression is curious, for limestone of a deep, purplish blue has been largely used, and the contrast with white limestone and marble gives an effect of blue-and-white colouring that almost suggests Dutch china. St Bavon was a peer of high degree when he lived on earth, and the artist who painted the picture of him which hangs over the high altar chose to emphasize the fact by depicting him in lordly robes, instead of in the humbler guise which he must have adopted when he renounced the vanities of the world and took up his abode in a hollow tree! But the crowning glory of St Bavon's cathedral is not the portrait of its patron saint; it is the picture called "The Adoration of the Lamb," painted between 1420 and 1432 by the brothers Jan and Hubert Van Eyck. "Masterpiece of masterpieces—*trésor du monde!*" exclaims the enthusiastic verger who shows it to the traveller, and who gives vent to his enthusiasm in three or four languages at once. The side-panels, with bearded pilgrims (one in a cosy-looking scarlet cloak), St Cecilia playing a tiny oaken organ, angels singing and hermits swinging rosaries, are only copies of the originals, which are in Berlin, but the central scene is the *real* masterpiece. It represents a rich landscape, with flower-sprinkled turf in the foreground, blue hills in the far distance,

Holland and Belgium

and spires and towers of some half-heavenly city on the right ; on the left are groves of cypress and palm, and masses of blossoming trees. On gold in the centre Lamb, round which with many-coloured advances a band of bearing the palms of right come other the maid," among St Agnes, carrying with her tower, and basket of roses. In ground is a fountain, of gold, and on either farther groups of the Twelve Apostles, dinals, seven bishops, obscure but not Fine and memorable it has a queer, steep of the more distant air, or just about to to the heads of those



THE BELFRY, BRUGES

to the fact that the brothers Van Eyck, though they were the first to bring the use of oil-paints to perfection, had

Book of Other Lands

not grasped the rules of perspective. The first painter to grasp *those* rules was Uccello, whose acquaintance we made in Florence.

The journey from Ghent to Bruges is not particularly exciting, but when you reach the second town you almost forget the first. In Flemish *Brugge* means 'Bridge,' and when you see how many bridges are needed by the good folk who live in that northern Venice you soon understand how the place got its name.

In the Market-place of Bruges
Stands the belfry, old and brown,¹

a beautiful landmark, seven hundred years old and 353 feet high. Its bells ring out so suddenly, with such a joyous clashing and babbling, that they seem to startle all the other ancient towers, and all the ruddy-tiled, high-peaked roofs in the town. Those towers are many, for Bruges is rich in great Gothic churches, and those churches, in turn, are rich in works of art, paintings, statues (there is a Madonna and Child by Michaelangelo in the Cathedral), and lordly tombs. The Chapel of the Holy Blood has an unexpectedly modern look within, but the relic preserved there was brought back from the Holy Land by Theodoric, Count of Flanders, as long ago as the year 1150.

In the Hospital of St John are yet more treasures of Flemish art, the chief of these being the Shrine of St Ursula, painted by Hans Memling, with scenes from the life of the saint. According to the legend, Ursula was the daughter of a British king, whose hand was sought by a heathen prince. She agreed to marry him on condition that he should become a Christian, and that she should be allowed a space of three years in which to make a pilgrimage with the 11,000 converted maidens whom she had adopted! They set off for Rome by way of the Rhine, and after a sojourn in the Holy City, where the Pope received the 11,000 converts with much kindness, proceeded homeward along the same river, with an escort of valiant knights. But alas! at Cologne a horde of heathen

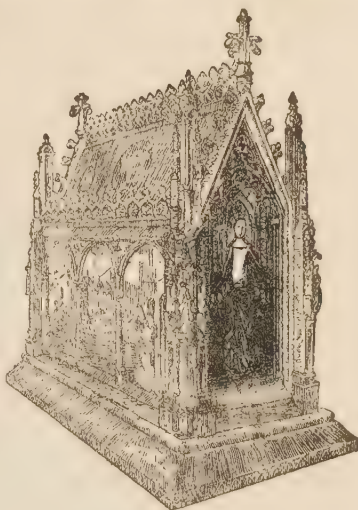
¹ Longfellow, *The Belfry of Bruges*.

Holland and Belgium

Huns fell upon the pious band, and, despite the desperate efforts of the knights in their defence, Ursula and all her maidens were cruelly slain. On the panels of the shrine Memling has told the story again, with wonderful charm of form and colour, and with a gentleness and grace that soften the horror of the closing scene.

There is probably no country in the world so small as Belgium which contains anything like so many beautiful ancient towns. Their very names — Malines, Ypres, Louvain, Dinant, Antwerp, Courtrai—call up visions of fretted stone-work, many-coloured windows, deep-voiced chimes high in the air, and noble halls built by merchants who spent on the creation of pure beauty in wood and glass and stone the store of money which they had amassed by dint of skill in craftsmanship and diligence in labour. Much that had survived five hundred years of rain and wind and war was laid low in the last that was the greatest war of all, but much still remains to bear witness to the wisdom of those Flemish merchants of long ago.

Since the Great War many acres in Belgium have become holy ground and a place of proud and sorrowful pilgrimage to Britons, both to those between whom and the Flemish coast there lies only a narrow line of salt water, and to those who belong to the British dominions beyond the sea. The scars that disfigured the fair green earth are healing fast, the shattered walls are being rebuilt ; but in the Ypres salient certain ruins are to be left in all their gaunt dejection as a memorial to those who fought and died there, yet would *not* yield the shell-furrowed soil it was their task to defend.



ST URSULA'S SHRINE

Book of Other Lands

Happily Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, and Brussels are little—if any—the worse. Brussels is best described by the French word *riant*. It is of all capitals the most smiling. There is something gay and friendly even about the little trams, like toys, that slide about the shady streets in summer, yet further shaded by fresh awnings of white and green. When we reach the capital we have left behind us the flat plains of Flanders, and we see again that object, called a hill, whose very existence we had half forgotten when we were among the canals and avenues. None of the hills in Brussels is particularly high, but one, at least, is tolerably steep. This is the hill on the summit of which stands the very beautiful cathedral of St Gudule, with its huge stained-glass windows full of kings and queens in the puffed and padded costumes of the early sixteenth century.

The traveller is very fortunate who happens to visit the famous Grande Place of Brussels on a day when banners are displayed from the windows of the beautiful old houses and the bells of Brussels are ringing a jocund peal. The square in the middle has been the scene of various picturesque events, of tournaments, and processions, and public executions. Here perished Lamoral, Count Egmont, and Philip de Montmorency, Count Hoorn, of whose valiant stand against the tyranny of the Duke of Alva, Philip II's envoy, you may read in the stirring pages of Motley's *Dutch Republic*.

On the southern outskirts of Brussels a broad road runs through the not very thickly planted beeches of the Bois de la Cambre, and thence into the rather deeper shadows of the Forest of Soignies. This is the highroad from Brussels to Charleroi, and it was Napoleon's intended line of advance from the valley of the Sambre in June, 1815. If you follow the road, it will lead you straight across the battlefield of Waterloo. It would be hard to imagine a more peaceful landscape than this rolling expanse of cornfields and pasture, with its few and far-off white-walled farmsteads, but the names of two of those houses give the imagination a sudden jog. They are La Haye Sainte and Hougomont. Step by step the memory retraces the story of that battle fought under

Holland and Belgium

the leaden haze of a clouded summer Sunday. Then it seems as if, here and there on the more distant slopes, there are moving patches of red—the British infantrymen—and heaving ridges of golden casques and dark streaming plumes—the French cavalry. And the air seems to throb again with the dull beating of cannon-fire. Again there is a splutter of musketry from the white-washed walls of La Haye Sainte. Farther away, in the south-west, at the château of Hougomont—it *had* been a château once, but its glory had departed before it was the centre of the most desperate French attacks during the battle of Waterloo—there is a spurt of flame and an ugly gush of smoke from the outbuildings which Jerome Bonaparte's troops have set alight. The story never grows old of the valour shown in that famous conflict both by the men who followed



POLICE OFFICER AND HIS TRAINED DOG

Napoleon along the road to Brussels and by the men who, under Wellington, thrust back the flower of his army and barred the way to the city. The whole destiny of Europe was in the balance on that undulating plain between Mont St Jean, whence the Iron Duke directed the early stages of the battle, and the tavern of La Belle Alliance, to the right of which Napoleon planted himself for the best part of the fatal day. Even the most fervent admirers of the great Emperor—and he has many, even in the land of his ancient foes—can hardly say *now* that they wish the result of the conflict had been otherwise. But they will pause with perhaps a little more emotion before the bronze eagle with

Book of Other Lands

the broken wing which commemorates the desperate charge of the Imperial Guard under Marshal Ney than before the lion-topped pyramid erected to emphasize the fact that *some* Belgian troops fought on the winning side. They will think how Wellington wept as he rode over this very field in the moonlight, when the last sullen murmur of the cannon had died down, at that hour of which Byron wrote :

The earth is covered thick with other clay
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent.

If we follow the road to Nivelles and thence to Charleroi we shall find ourselves in a region of reeking chimneys and dully



THE CHÂTEAU DE WALZIN, ON THE MEUSE

glowing furnaces — the Belgian Black Country. But beyond that belt of ugliness and industry lies the river Meuse, sometimes called the Belgian Rhine, which runs through the glorious tract of wooded and craggy country known as the Ardennes. Readers of *Quentin Durward* will remember de la Marck, the "Wild Boar" of the Ardennes, that fearsome fellow on whose shoulders, over his knightly armour, "hung a strong surcoat made of the dressed skin of a huge wild boar, the

hoofs being of solid silver and the tusks of the same. The skin of the head was so arranged that, drawn over the casque when the Baron was armed, or over his bare head in the fashion of a hood . . . the effect was that of a grinning, ghastly monster." Bold and wicked Barons of this cheerful type in-



BRUGES

The Belfry stands up beyond the trees

Photo Donald McLeish



RUINED YPRES

Photo Donald McLeish

Holland and Belgium

fested the banks of the Meuse in the days of King Louis XI, and crumbling fragments of their strongholds may still be seen, here and there, on the rocky hills that rise steeply, their flanks thickly clothed with trees, on either side of the river. Such a castle is Montaigle, whose noble owner was wont to stop the boats and barges on their way past his particular crag and exact a heavy toll from them before he would allow them to depart. But at the Castle of Bouillon, on the Semois, a tributary of the Meuse, we get a closer touch of the grim side of the "good old days." This fortress was built in the eighth and ninth centuries, and its vaults and dungeons are hollowed out of the living rock below the level of the river. In the 'Salle de Question' there are iron loops and hooks still embedded in the wall to which various ingenious instruments of torture were attached, and on the battlements, high above the enchantingly lovely valley of the Semois, you can see slits through which boiling lead was poured on to the heads of the besiegers, and stone pipes through which lances were thrust to tilt backward scaling-ladders which any venturesome attacker had run up there. Most weird of all is an *oubliette*—those deep hewn prison-cells were so called because captives were soon *oubliés* in their noisome depths—over which there is an iron grating less than two feet square. If a sheet of newspaper be set alight at one corner and pushed down this grating, it will have ceased to flame before it has ceased to fall, so far below is the dungeon floor. This grisly castle was the ancestral home of Godefroy de Bouillon, the gallant Crusader who led the Christian forces at the capture of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, and would have been first Christian King of the Holy City had he not declined "to wear a crown of gold where his Saviour wore a crown of thorns." After his defeat of the Sultan of Egypt on the plain of Ascalon, Godefroy was master of Palestine, and, had he been granted longer life, might have so consolidated the Crusaders' gains in the Holy Land that not Saladin himself could have dislodged them. But he died in 1100, very far from the valley of the crystal-clear Semois, with its silver-starred water-lilies and its millions of bright blue butterflies in summer, and its dark pinewoods roused by the

Book of Other Lands

sound of hunting horns in winter, when the lords of the crag-built castles went forth to chase the wild boar.

All this territory in north-eastern Belgium is haunted by visions of long-dead warriors and bygone wars. We have seen how Napoleon's army, after the Hundred Days, advanced along the line of the Sambre. Louis XIV campaigned here, in his gorgeous and triumphant way, and there is hardly one of its greater towns that did not bear the brunt of fierce sieges in the mediæval clashes between the jealous kings of France and the arrogant dukes of Burgundy. More thrilling than all these memories, however, are those called up by a craggy hillside not far from the busy modern town of Charleroi. In summer the steep flank of this hill is flecked with rosy-purple, where the tall foxgloves grow among the fir-trees. The village in the valley below is called Vitriual—the valley of victory. In the year 57 B.C. the place was a stronghold of a warlike Belgic tribe called the Nervii. It was from that craggy hill that the Tenth Legion crashed down upon the tribesmen and turned the fortunes of battle when they seemed doubtful ; and it was thus and there that Julius Cæsar “overcame the Nervii.”

CHAPTER XII

SCANDINAVIA

THERE is, of course, no single country called Scandinavia, and if you were to hunt for one on the map you would hunt in vain. The name is given to a group of three countries—Norway, Sweden, and Denmark—in north-eastern Europe. The first two form what is called the Scandinavian peninsula, while the third consists of a strip of land and a cluster of islands between the Baltic and the North Sea.

All three countries are interesting in many ways. The lover of romantic history remembers that here were the homes of the Vikings, the fierce sea-rovers whose dragon-prowed ships fared as far as Constantinople and America; the lover of sport knows that reindeer-stalking and salmon-fishing in Norway are among the finest sports in the world; the lover of natural history is glad of a chance to study reindeer, elk, and lemming at close quarters, and to catch a glimpse of the various northern birds and beasts whose coats turn white in winter; the lover of fairy-tales and of poetry will seek Odensee, in Denmark, the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen, and Elsinore, the home of "Hamlet the Dane," though he will not find there the cliff "that beetles o'er its base into the sea," that Shakespeare described so vividly, for the simple reason that there are no cliffs on the sandy shore at that point. Then, the thought of seeing the sun's disc above the horizon at midnight is weirdly thrilling, and this can be seen in Norway and Sweden every summer, when for a time the phrase "as dark as night" loses all meaning for the dwellers in the Land of the Midnight Sun. Sweden occupies the eastern and larger part of the Scandinavian peninsula. Its mountainous districts are thickly wooded with birch and aspen, oak and ash. The aspen, indeed, is almost *too* abundant, and the Swedish farmer looks upon its flickering silver leaves with "anything but joy."

Book of Other Lands

Elk and reindeer are common to Norway and Sweden, and in both countries many of the smaller creatures, such as the hare, the weasel, and the feathery-legged willow-grouse, turn pure white in winter, and are almost invisible against the snow. The golden eagle, the buzzard, and the owl have their habitation among the mountains and forests of Sweden, while the gull, the tern, and the eider-duck haunt the sea-coast.



A MAIDEN OF RATTRICK, IN
THE PROVINCE OF DALARNA

“Greenland’s icy mountains,” or, rather, the hardly less icy valleys that lie between those mountains, are the real home of the eider-duck, which makes its nest inside the houses of the Eskimos. Those that find their way to the Swedish sea-coast are less tame. The drake is easily recognized by his lovely black-and-white plumage, his breast tinged with faint fawn and his head with pale green. It is after one of these birds has been killed to form a dinner for an Eskimo family that the beautiful soft down on its breast is taken, in order to stuff quilts and counterpanes and keep human people as cosy in bed as it once kept the eider-duck cosy in the land of ice and snow.

The Swedes are much more lively and cheerful than their neighbours,

the Norwegians, and many of their picturesque old customs survive to this day. Especially is this the case in the province of Dalarna, known as ‘the heart of Sweden,’ where the sturdy, silent, independent people still wear the old national dress, and keep up the old national traditions. The men usually don this dress only on occasions of ceremony, but by the women it is worn practically every day. The fabric is thick home-spun cloth. The women wear a pleated skirt of this cloth, the front width being striped with various colours, often with yellow. Over a white chemisette a black corselet-

Scandinavia

bodice is laced, the eyelet holes being rimmed with silver : round the shoulders is folded a vivid triangular shawl, sometimes with a pattern of red roses and green leaves. An apron, hardly less gay, covers the skirt, and in very cold weather a big coat of white sheepskin comes last, and protects the bright garments and their wearer from the snow. Both in Sweden and Norway brooches and other trinkets of silver and gold filigree are very popular, and a Norwegian bride is often decorated with highly polished silver coins as well. The form of the cap worn by women and girls in Dalarna varies greatly, being sometimes conical and sometimes flat. The men wear long, dark coats over buckskin breeches, stout shoes with silver buckles, and broad-brimmed hats. All these garments are so well made that they practically never wear out, and are handed down from one generation to another, with the result that the quaint old fashions do not die out, as they do in countries where each generation has to provide itself with many sets of new clothes.

A wedding in Dalarna is a sight not easy to forget. Friends and relations are invited from miles round, and to make it easier for them to accept the invitation the date fixed usually falls in the summer. The houses of the bride's and the bridegroom's families are filled with guests, and even the houses of hospitable neighbours are invaded, during the three to six days that the festivities last. Fiddlers, scraping away with might and main, walk before the painted cart, decked with flowers, in which sit the bride and bridegroom, clad most probably in the same picturesque array that their parents and grandparents wore on the same solemn occasion. If, as happens rather often, they have to cross a lake on their way to the church, the crossing is made in long ' church-boats,' propelled by several pairs of oars. The preparation of food before a wedding is a tremendous task, for the guests always expect bounteous fare, and it is a question of honour not to disappoint them. Even a funeral is made an occasion for a certain amount of junketing, and when all is over, and the mourners have feasted to their heart's content, it sometimes happens that the day will close with a dance—at which nobody feels the slightest shock of surprise !

Book of Other Lands

More interesting to the younger members of a Swedish family are the delightful events of Christmas week. The preparations begin quite early in the autumn. Calves, pigs, and geese are fattened and killed to grace the Christmas board, sausages are made, huge hams are salted and hung up to smoke, cod-fish are steeped in a mixture of wood-ash and soda from which they acquire a flavour that few people outside the frontiers of Sweden can thoroughly appreciate. All the baking of cakes has to be finished by St Lucy's Day, 13th December,



HOUSE OF A SWEDISH GENTLEMAN

when parties are given at each of which a girl is crowned as St Lucy, her green diadem being set round with little lighted candles. At these St Lucy parties the Christmas cakes are sampled, and the children begin to think that Christmas is *really* coming at last. All the house has been scrubbed and polished, all the window-curtains and tablecloths have been washed and bleached as white as the snow outside, when Christ-

mas Eve arrives. Dinner on that night is an important meal, and consists of white, transparent fish served with white sauce, peas, and potatoes, boiled ham, and a dish of rice in which there is just one solitary almond. The person who finds that almond on his—or her—plate will be married (of course !) before Christmas comes round again. After the rice come sweet tartlets, and the whole dinner is enlivened by a sort of dark, heady ale never drunk at any other time of year. The house is gay with nodding and flickering lights, for there are dozens of candles on the table as well as on the great Christmas-tree. After the singing of hymns—in which everybody joins—round the tree, the master of the house distributes gifts in neat parcels sealed with scarlet wax. If any member of the family should possess a knack of rhyme, comical or affectionate



A VILLAGE SCHOOL IN SWEDEN

This is the usual dress of teacher and children in the heart of Sweden

Photo Donald McLeish

Scandinavia

little 'poems' are packed in each parcel. Nobody is forgotten. A sheaf of corn is put out for the birds, and cows and horses get an extra feed and an extra allowance of straw bedding. Sometimes a little bowl of porridge and milk is set on the door-step for the fairies whose goodwill brings luck to the house. Not only is nobody forgotten; nobody is 'grown up' on Christmas Eve. White-haired grandparents join their children and grandchildren in dancing round the tree and all through the house, to the merry strains of some old Swedish dance-tune that brings with it memories of their own childhood and of Christmas Eves of long ago. On Christmas morning nobody is allowed an extra forty winks in bed. By five or six o'clock, when the great northern stars are still sparkling in the purple sky above the silvered pine-trees, the sledge is at the door, waiting to take the whole family to church. And there they go, well muffled up in rugs and furs, to the blithe music of the bells on the hooped collars of the sturdy little Swedish horses. Torches are carried to light them on their way, and outside the door of the church all these torches are flung in a heap, making a gorgeous bonfire in the snow. Inside, a tall green Christmas-tree stands on either side of the altar, and to give the final 'Christmassy' touch to the scene the smaller children are allowed to bring their best-loved toys to church with them.

The Swedes being such a lively people, it follows naturally that Stockholm is one of the liveliest capitals in Europe. It is surrounded by lakes and islands, ideal spots for picnics in summer. A favourite pleasure resort is the Zoo, where, instead of going to see the wild beasts feed, the Stockholmers go and feed *themselves*, dining in the open air to the music of a band. The Humelgård, or Hop-garden, is another very pleasant place, and there you will find a statue of one of Sweden's most famous sons, Carl Linné, or Linnæus (1707-1778), the botanist, who became a professor at the great Swedish university of Upsala, and inspired his students with his own ardent love of wildflowers. At this university is preserved the *Codex Argentinus*, a translation of the gospel according to St Luke into the Gothic tongue, made by Bishop

Book of Other Lands

Ulfilas in the fourth century, and written upon purple parchment in letters of silver—one of the most precious biblical manuscripts in the world.

Norway occupies the western and smaller part of the Scandinavian peninsula. Its mountain peaks are many, but not very lofty, few rising above three or four thousand feet. It has, however, the largest glacier in Continental Europe, the Josterdalsbræ, covering an expanse of 580 square miles.



A COMMUNION SERVICE IN NORWAY

The coast, deeply indented and fringed with innumerable islands, is marked by a chain of *fjords*, or narrow, rock-bound inlets, of which one of the best-known and most beautiful is the Geiranger Fjord. The typical Norwegian scenery of these fjords, with their great depth of dark water (at Stavanger it is 380 fathoms deep), the reflections of the steep cliffs, and the gorgeous effects of light and colour, draw many eager tourists across the North Sea every year. A glance at the map shows what an ideal base the Vikings had for their forays, and the background has changed so little since their time that a traveller with a vivid imagination might easily

Scandinavia

fancy that he saw the golden dragon at the prow of a Norse pirate's boat rounding the craggy headlands or the clustering islands of the Scandinavian coast.

Though Oslo (till recently called Christiania, though its new name is really an older one) is the capital of Norway, it is less interesting historically than Trondhjem, a city and seaport on the south side of the fjord with which it shares its name. There you see the real old Norwegian houses, built of wood, with peaked gables and latticed panes. It is there that for many centuries the kings and queens of Norway have been crowned, in the beautiful Gothic cathedral which is interesting to Englishmen, and more especially to men of Kent, because of its kinship with the cathedral at Canterbury. Archbishop Eystein paid a visit to England during his episcopate (1160-1188), and he is believed to have borrowed some ideas from the Norman architecture of the great Kentish church, the scene of Becket's martyrdom, of which portions still remain in the fabric of the even greater church raised over the dust of the martyr.



TIMBERED HOUSE IN TELEMAR, NORWAY

High up on the snow-line of the Norse mountains there is little plant-life except Alpine flora, reindeer-moss, and lichen. As you descend, you find willows and dwarf-birches, and, lower still, dense forests of pine and fir. In the uplands, where no trees grow, you will find carpets of lovely Alpine flowers, the *Ranunculus glacialis*, cousin of the English wood-anemone, with its delicate-fringed petals shading from palest pink to darkest crimson, the blue gentian, the golden saxifrage, the scarlet stone-crop, and the stubborn butterwort.

Book of Other Lands

Lower, there are toad-flax, campanulas, cranes-bill, monks-hood, and mountain violets. But it is to the angler, the sportsman, and the naturalist that Norway is fascinating, rather than to the botanist. The two most important, and the two largest, animals are the elk (called in Canada the 'moose') and the reindeer (called in Canada the 'caribou'). More curious than either, and encountered nowhere else, is the little lemming. To the elk and the reindeer we will return; but first let us pause and look at the lemming—a proceeding to which he will probably object fiercely. As he is only about five inches long, his objections will not daunt us, and while he stands on his hind-feet, with his back to a stone, glaring at us with his beady dark eyes and hissing loudly, we can have a good look at his blunt, flat head, his little feet (legs he has none to speak of) and his yellowish-brown, fluffy coat spotted with darker brown or black. The lemming is a rodent, a member of the same family as the mouse, the beaver, the hare, and the guinea-pig. In spite of his lack of legs he can walk for enormous distances, and with his strong fore-paws he can both dig and scratch. He lives in the highlands and fells of the great mountain-chain of Norway and Sweden, and makes his nest of straw and fur under the shelter of a tussock of grass or an upstanding stone. He lives chiefly on dwarf-birch twigs, lichen and moss, and will make long tunnels under the turf or through the snow in pursuit of his dinner. But the most curious fact about him is yet to be told. At irregular intervals of five, ten, or twenty years, a vast army of lemmings descends from the mountains and overruns the cultivated lands of the valleys. On and on they come, all marching in the same direction, none turning to right or left. Sometimes when food is plentiful this army will halt for a while before continuing its march. As may be guessed, it leaves destruction in its wake, for vast quantities of greenstuff are devoured as it advances. Nothing will stop that advance. If the lemmings reach a river or a lake, they plunge in and swim to the other side. They have been known to cross a lake three miles in breadth, but none has ever been known to turn back or fall out. Many, however, perish by

Scandinavia

the way. Eagles, owls, and hawks swoop upon them, bears, wolves, and weasels attack them, even domestic animals join the anti-lemming league, and hurt and hinder the unwelcome strangers when they get a chance. But the survivors plod steadily on, sometimes for *three years*, taking with them any baby lemmings that may have been born on the way, until they reach the sea-coast. And there, still advancing in the same direction, they plunge into the waves and swim onward until they perish. At one time it was thought that a wild impulse of self-destruction seized the lemmings at intervals.



NATIONAL CART OF NORWAY

But modern naturalists declare that this is not the case, and that when, owing to scarcity of food or excess of numbers, this queer instinct to advance awakes in them, they are simply seeking fresh pastures, and blindly believe that the sea is another lake, no wider than the lakes that they have already crossed in safety.

The elk and the reindeer are cousins, but there are some striking points of difference between them. The elk is the largest member of the deer-tribe, and one of the least graceful. While its legs are exceptionally long, its neck is exceptionally short, with the result that it cannot graze, but has to nourish itself upon the shoots and leaves of willows and birches. The antlers of the elk project on either side of its skull, at right angles to the line of the nose, while the more slender antlers of the reindeer grow 'fore and aft,' the shorter and smaller

Book of Other Lands

branches pointing forward, and the longer ones pointing back. The elk is a queer-looking creature, with its heavy overhanging muzzle, its big, flat nostrils, and its receding 'chin.' Under the 'chin' of the male elk swings a tuft or tassel of



AN ELK

long hair, of a darker colour than its fawnish-grey coat, which adds much to the quaintness of its appearance. Its usual pace is an awkward, lumbering trot, but when startled or pursued it is capable of quite a brisk gallop. The Alaskan moose is taller than the Scandinavian elk, and the fan-shaped antlers are larger,

and project farther on each side of the head.

Wild reindeer are found both in Norway and Sweden, and are stalked by sportsmen, as are the stags of the Scottish highlands; but this animal was tamed many centuries ago by the Lapps, those queer folk who dwell at the northern extremity of the Scandinavian peninsula, spreading into parts of Russia and Finland as well. The Lapps are mostly nomads, and shift from place to place according to the season of the year. Visitors to Stockholm and Upsala experience quite a pleasant thrill when they see one of these wanderers from the frozen north, clad in reindeer-hide, a stout hood pulled up over his head and framing his broad, flat, copper-tinted face wrinkled by exposure to wind and snow. The reindeer is the best friend the Lapps have. It provides them with garments, meat, milk, and cheese. Harnessed to a sleigh, it can draw a load weighing 300 pounds a distance of one hundred miles a day across the frozen snow. In southern Scandinavia it sometimes has the easier task of drawing a ski-runner along! Both Swedes and Norwegians are tremendously keen on winter-sports. In addition to tobogganning, skating and ski-running, they sail ice-yachts with grace and skill, and skaters will sometimes attach sails to *themselves* and go skimming gaily over the ice.

Scandinavia

In contrast to Norway and Sweden, Denmark is a flat country indeed. Occupying part of a peninsula and a group of islands between the Baltic and the North Sea, it is in the south and the east a land of beech-woods, cornfields, and pasture, while in western and northern Jutland you find bleak sand-hills and wastes of wiry heather ending on the coast with a line of low, whitish-grey cliffs.

Farming is the principal industry of this most industrious little country, and the typical Danish farmer goes about his work in a serious and practical spirit. Though handicapped both by the climate and the soil, he contrives to overcome both, and to export to England and other lands huge mountains of butter, stacks of eggs, and regiments of pigs—in the form of bacon! He studies the science of farming systematically, and is able to tell at a glance what is the geological character of any specimen of earth, what crops would grow best in such earth, and what chemicals would be most likely to help those crops to grow. There is a saying that if a Dane has only one solitary egg he will export it. But it must be a good one, for each egg is tested with an electrical apparatus before being packed for shipment to England, and an elderly egg cannot pretend to be a new-laid one under that fierce ray!

The words you will hear most often in Denmark are "*Vær saa god*"—be so good. They are uttered on all occasions, sometimes when an Englishman would say "Excuse me," or "Permit me," or "Please," and sometimes, so polite are the Danes, when an Englishman would say nothing at all. These words resound on all sides during the holiday-season at Fanö, a long narrow island in the harbour of Esbjerg. Here there is a delightful sandy beach, where Danes of all ages dig with unflagging enthusiasm. Only the aged and the lazy hold aloof, and even *they* dig little trenches, like miniature moats, round the hooded wicker chairs from which they watch the labours of their more energetic friends. Though there are long stretches of bare sand, and many sand-hills where nothing but coarse, stiff reeds will grow, some of the Fanö hills are carpeted with delicate wildflowers, including wild pansies and harebells. Dotted here and there are trim farm-

Book of Other Lands

houses, their walls painted with pale, bright colours and their roofs covered with thick thatch. On the mainland the old Danish national dress has almost disappeared, but the women of Fanö continue to wear their close-fitting, dark stuff frocks with a line of a gayer hue round the hem of the skirt and their characteristic head-gear, which consists of a scarlet-and-blue kerchief twisted and tied so as to hide every trace of hair, and surmounted by two drooping and dangling ends rather like the ears of a lop-eared rabbit. You will have a slight shock if, when you go for a walk on the island of Fanö, you meet a group of women wearing black masks under their lop-eared kerchiefs. These are not members of some weird secret society, nor are they taking part in some strange open-air play. The masks are intended simply to preserve the cheeks of the wearers from the effects of sun and wind.

There is no country in Europe—with the possible exception of Scotland—where education is regarded with so much seriousness as it is in Denmark. A Dane's lesson-days are not over when he leaves the State-school and begins to work for his living. In Denmark there is a system by which a very large proportion of the population can have a two-years' course of more advanced instruction, at very low fees, or without any fees at all.

Out of the two to three million inhabitants of this little country some seven thousand young men and women are receiving this special instruction in the *Folkekøjskoler*, or people's high schools, each year. The girls usually concentrate their studies into the winter months, while the boys attend in the summer. They leave their farms and fields, their workshops and fishing-boats, and when, after finishing their studies, they take up the interrupted tasks, their minds are widened and enriched by the knowledge they have acquired concerning the history and literature of their own and other lands, together with chemistry, physics, and political economy, all exceedingly useful branches of science to this practical and industrious people. One result of this system is seen in quite lonely and remote villages where, at the conclusion of harvest-time, a series of meetings is held in the school buildings, and

Scandinavia

an eager audience of farmers and their families listens to lectures upon subjects which in most other countries would be considered more or less 'highbrow'—such subjects as the religion of Mohammed, the Darwinian theory, the Greek drama, and the career of Martin Luther. The state religion of Denmark, like that of Norway and Sweden, is a form of Lutheranism. The clergymen in Denmark and Norway wear a picturesque and charming dress which reminds us of the portraits of Elizabethan worthies—nowhere else is the real Elizabethan ruff worn in such perfection. Unfortunately the Norwegians, like the Danes, are abandoning their national costume, though you still see here and there a young woman who has the good sense to stick to her pretty apron of drawn-thread-work, her white-sleeved blouse under the black corselet, her filigree trinkets set with fragments of coloured stone, and the headdress once most usual in her district or village—perhaps a bow of striped ribbon with upstanding loops, perhaps a mitre-shaped black affair sewn with silver ornaments, perhaps a cap like a square bag made of figured material stiffened inside, the two corners sloping away from the forehead and toward the back of the head.

It is natural that a country which produces so much food should be conscious of the important part played by a nation's meals. And every traveller in Denmark is made to taste the national dish, *smørrebrød*. Fortunately, there are numerous different varieties, for some will not appeal to him at all, while others leave a pleasant impression in the memory. *Smørrebrød* is something like a sandwich without the top layer of bread, if you could imagine such a thing. The basis is bread-and-butter, and upon that are arranged various eatables—fragments of ham or fish, salad, hard-boiled eggs, radishes, and cheese. At the Tivoli pleasure-gardens in Copenhagen whole families of worthy Danes may be seen any fine summer evening listening to the music, watching the illuminated fountains, and consuming *smørrebrød* to their hearts' content.

Copenhagen itself is a flat, clean city, with many graceful spires breaking the regularity of its skyline, and a number of handsome modern buildings. Chief of these last is the

Book of Other Lands

Thorwaldsen museum, and the story of its foundation is like a fairy-tale. Thorwaldsen's father was not a Dane but an Ice-lander, a son of that bleak, grey, mysterious island which was in the olden times the centre of a rich culture and a fine civilization. By calling he was a carver of ships' figure-heads, but the splendour of Iceland had long departed, there was little work for him at home, and he and his wife decided to betake themselves to Copenhagen and seek their fortune where they would have a better chance of finding it. This was in the year 1770. While they were on board ship, bound for Denmark, a baby son was born to them, destined afterward to be one of the greatest sculptors in Europe. They gave him the name of Bertel, and while he was still a tiny boy he began to try to use his father's tools, and to carve figures out of wood. So unmistakably did his genius declare itself, he was able, despite the poverty of his family, to make his way to Rome and study the sculptor's art in the Eternal City. He remained in Italy for the greater part of his life, and won fame and fortune far from Denmark ; but his heart remained in the North, and when, in 1844, he died, it was found that he had bequeathed many of his statues and most of his money to the city of Copenhagen. At his desire, the money was devoted to building the Thorwaldsen Museum, where the statues are now housed, and where, under a bed of roses in the central garden, the sculptor himself lies buried.

As famous as the sculptor was another Dane, one whose name most children know, and whose works most children love. This Dane was Hans Christian Andersen, the teller of fairy-tales, the beloved of the nursery, the wizard who can unlock the heart of a child. The place of his birth was Odensee, a quaint little town whose name is borrowed from that of Odin, the chief of all the ancient Scandinavian gods, and the year of his birth was Trafalgar year, 1805. His father, a poor cobbler, occupied only a single room in the one-storied house with the small-paned windows where Hans Christian was born, and he did not live long enough to see his queer, dreamy son grow from childhood to manhood. Left fatherless at the age of eleven, Hans Christian decided that he had had enough of



A FERRY ON THE NAERO FJORD

This is the most impressive fjord in Norway

Photo Donald McLeish



A NORWEGIAN CHRISTENING

The woman bearing the child is from the Hardanger district; her neighbour is from Voso.
Their caps denote that they are married

Photo Donald McLeish

Scandinavia

school, and while his poor mother went out washing, he remained at home playing with a toy theatre which he had somehow contrived to make for himself. Perhaps it was his skill in making clothes for his puppets that inspired his mother with the belief that her boy was born to be a tailor! What plays did Hans Christian make his dolls act, all by himself in that humble room at Odensee? First of all, the dramas written by a Danish author, Baron Holberg (1684-1754), and, later on, some others, translated from the English of a rather better-known dramatist, William Shakespeare by name. Good Mrs Andersen was steadfast in her conviction that the best possible career for her son was that of a tailor. But Hans Christian did not agree with her. When *he* peered into the future he saw a vision of himself not sewing cross-legged on a table but singing on the stage of the Royal Opera House at Copenhagen! He made his way to the capital and tried hard to get an engagement either as a singer or a dancer, but his rustic accent and his countrified appearance were against him, and he was for a time in dire poverty. However, the attention of King Frederick VI was attracted to him, and, thanks to royal favour, he was sent to the great grammar-school at Slagelse. Oddly enough, Hans Christian proved to be a slow and reluctant scholar! In 1829 he published a farce and a little volume of verse, neither of which had any success. In 1836 appeared the first instalment of his charming fairy-tales, which continued to appear at intervals till 1872, and which brought him both fame and fortune. Hans Christian himself did not think much of them, and would much have preferred to rest upon his reputation as a poet or a writer of plays and 'grown-up' novels. The public knew better. There were plenty poets about, and plenty novelists, but not a single storyteller who could tell them as *he* could about Ib and Little Christina, What the Moon Saw, The Magic Goloshes, the Little Match-Girl, and the Red Shoes. The world clamoured for more fairy-tales, and Hans Christian, almost in spite of himself, gave the world what it wanted. In June, 1847, he paid a visit to England, where he was received with enthusiasm. When he set sail from Ramsgate pier homeward-bound, he was sped

Book of Other Lands

on his way by no less a personage than Charles Dickens. Denmark delighted to honour her illustrious son. The King invited him to Court, and the King's children gathered round him, eager to see the teller of so many dear and familiar fairy-tales. He took one of those children—a little girl with violet eyes—upon his knee, and talked to her about the fairies, and told her some of his quaint and charming fancies about fairy-land.

It is for the sake of that little girl as well as for the sake of Hans Christian Andersen that thousands of Britons think affectionately of Denmark to-day, for she was the princess who grew up to be Queen of England, the beautiful, kind-hearted, and gentle "Sea-King's daughter from over the sea," Alexandra.

CHAPTER XIII

ESKIMO-LAND

THE home of the Eskimo, a somewhat cold and bleak one in our eyes, lies across the northern extremity of the American continent, between Behring Straits on the west and Baffin's Bay on the east, extending also to Asiatic Russia (Siberia) on one side, and Greenland on the other. It would be a long and difficult journey to traverse Eskimo-land from Asia across America to the verge of Europe, so we will keep mainly to the regions round about the Mackenzie River in Canada, and the Eskimos whom we shall meet there are like their kinsfolk in so many ways that we might not learn a great deal more about them even if we should wander much farther afield.

The greater part of Eskimo-land lies within the Arctic Circle, which means that the seal and the whale are the best friends of the Eskimo, and the wolf and the Polar bear his most fearsome foes. But—as Dr Stefansson, the famous explorer, has told us—it does *not* mean that the whole landscape is wrapped in ice and snow all the year round, or that winter reigns from January to December. Within the Arctic Circle there are great tracts of land capable of growing wheat. Here the musk-ox, the caribou and other cattle find pasture, and the eider-duck and the ptarmigan build their nests. The Arctic summer is brief, but it is a *real* summer, complete with flowers and butterflies, and while it lasts the sun shines by night as well as by day. Still, the life of the Eskimo is a long tussle with the less friendly forces of nature. Luckily for himself, he is a cheerful, even-tempered fellow, seldom angry, hardly ever sad, and delighting in jokes, and ‘chaff,’ and comical stories.

If the Eskimos were a tall race they might find it rather uncomfortable to live, as they usually do, in tents of caribou-hide, houses dug out of the earth and walled with willow

Book of Other Lands

boughs, turf and stones, or low-roofed huts made of blocks of snow. They are, however, inclined to be 'dumpy,' though active and strong. The Eskimo ladies, in particular, tend to be decidedly plump. Their faces are jolly and quaint rather than beautiful, according to our ideas, being very broad and flat, the brow sloping slightly backward, the eyes narrow and



A CARIBOU, OR REINDEER

beady, and the features neither regular nor well cut. Most of the men wear clipped fringes above the eyebrows, and allow their wiry black locks to hang down behind, while the women wind *their* hair into a 'bun' on the top of the head. A traveller whose description was more vivid than polite says that the skin of the Eskimo has a "bacony" surface, owing to its being pickled with the smoke from moss-and-blubber lamps and *never washed*. Sometimes—but very seldom—an Eskimo mother will give her baby a bath in the same way

Eskimo-land

that a cat gives a bath to her kitten, before she pops him into the leathern bag stuffed with feathers which is his usual cradle. But for the rest of their lives the Eskimos remain unwashed. If by any chance the thick film of grime and smoke be removed from their faces, it is seen that their skin is not nearly so dark as it appears to be. Indeed, it is so fair that the red colour may be perceived in the cheeks of children and young girls.

Their garments are made entirely of the hides of seal, reindeer (caribou), bear, dog, and fox, and are well cut and neatly sewn. Steel needles from the south have reached many Eskimo settlements by now, but the Eskimo tailor who does not happen to possess such a thing can make small, regular stitches with a bone needle, using animal sinew for thread. Strictly speaking, there is no such a person as a tailor in Eskimo-land. Each family makes its own clothes. Nor is there a cutler, a cobbler, or a butcher, as each family makes its own bone or copper knives, its own boots of dyed leather, and kills and prepares its own meat. No builders are needed, for houses, whether of snow or of wood and earth, are built by the people who intend to dwell in them, and, as they seldom stay for very long in one house, great skill in building is not necessary. The building of a snow-house is an interesting operation; it is fully described in Dr Stefansson's *The Friendly Arctic*, and the distinguished explorer tells us that in some parts of Eskimo-land visited by him the natives had never heard of these 'houses,' and he taught them how to build them.

Like girls in other lands, Eskimo girls strive to make them-



AN ESKIMO

Book of Other Lands

selves look as nice as they can. They trim their leather trousers with the feathers of the eider-duck, or with patterns worked in strips of leather stained in various simple colours. An Eskimo mother wears a big hood attached to the collar of her jacket, and in this hood she carries her baby until he is too heavy for her. Very cosy he must be, curled up in his shelter. On the few occasions when he is not asleep, he can peep over



BUILDING A SNOW-HOUSE

his mother's shoulder and see what is going on—the noisy, joyful return of the dog-sledge with a load of frozen whale-meat, the skinning of a big brown caribou, the lighting of the stone lamp, with its blubber oil and its wick of moss, when the whole family is gathered together in the tent, or the hut, or the little snow-house.

To reach one of these snow-houses you must crawl along a tunnel and squeeze your way through a low door closed with a flap of reindeer hide. Sometimes it has windows with panes made of bright green ice. The big, strong, thick-maned dogs

Eskimo-land

who draw the sledges of the Eskimo and live on the friendliest terms with the children usually sleep in the tunnel leading to the house.

In quest of food and clothes and fuel the Eskimo hunter must be early astir. With his bow of whalebone, his fish-hooks, nets or harpoons—sometimes with his modern rifle, obtained in exchange for whalebone from white traders—he will go forth while the Aurora Borealis (the Northern Lights) still makes the sky gorgeous with long flickering streamers of gay and fantastic colours. It may be that our hunter will put

to sea in a canoe called a 'kayak' if the weather be friendly. So well do the Eskimos know that the sea is their larder, they seldom, even in pursuit of caribou, venture more than thirty miles inland. An Eskimo boat is a most ingenious contrivance of seal-skin or reindeer-hide stretched on a framework of whalebone or wood, with a hole cut in the centre fitting round the waist



ESKIMO DOG

of the 'boatman,' as he sits wielding his double-bladed paddle tipped with bone. A skilful paddler can turn a complete somersault in the water, canoe and all !

Fish, like most other foods, is eaten raw in Eskimo-land. Blubber-oil and fuel are hard to come by, and the art of cookery has to be practised in moderation. Luckily, the Eskimo likes meat uncooked and frozen hard, and if it is two years old, and tastes distinctly 'gamey,' he likes it all the better. The word 'Eskimo' means "eater of meat," but they call *themselves* "innuit"—the people. A stranded whale is a regular fairy-godmother's gift to a community of Eskimos, but it is not a gift which they can hope to receive every day, and much of their time and energy is spent trapping seals. Every one who has read the story of the White Seal in Mr

Book of Other Lands

Kipling's *Jungle Book* knows how the mother-seal teaches her baby to swim, and about the seal-nurseries, and the fierce old fathers with their bristling moustaches, and the fights that take place over the best spots on the beaches. Baby seals are always born on land, and, as a rule, it is not until they have shed their first soft white coat that their parents take them into the sea. The little seal doesn't like the look of the great big sea at all, and he doesn't seem at all anxious to learn the art of



AN ESKIMO GIRL

swimming, which his elders always insist upon teaching him. A full-grown seal measures four or five feet from nose-tip to the tip of his hind-flippers. His coat may be yellowish-grey, or tawny, or dark, dappled with black or brown, while the fur on his 'tummy' is creamy-white. Of course, by the time he is grown-up the seal is an expert swimmer and a skilful fisherman. In the water he is quite a graceful fellow, but on land his gait is the reverse of beautiful. Raising his hind flippers so that they shall not touch the ground, and neglecting, unless when pursued, to use his fore-flippers to help him along, he progresses in a shuffling manner that looks very

odd to anyone who has not seen it before. When caught young, seals are easily tamed, and can be taught many tricks. They like listening to music—in which they resemble their arch-foes, the Eskimos. On the other hand, they are easily deceived, and a skilled huntsman can get quite near one of them by heaving himself slowly along the ground and pretending to be a brother seal!

For the seals as for their human neighbours, summer is a pleasant time. Then they lie on the top of the ice, basking in the sunlight, each near the hole which has been his breathing-place all through the cruel winter. For a seal cannot live long

Eskimo-land

in the water without a whiff of fresh air, and when the thick ice imprisons him, he begins to get anxious. At first, before the frozen roof is too dense, he can thrust his round, sleek head through it whenever he feels inclined ; but this soon becomes impossible. Then the busy seal starts making a breathing-hole. On the surface it may be less than two inches in diameter, but it broadens downward so that the animal can push its head and shoulders, or even, when the ice is six or seven feet thick, its whole body up into the hollow. It is when the seal comes to breathe that the Eskimo hunter has the best chance of catching him. And this is how it is done. The hunter, after his dog has located a seal-hole, sticks into it a little bodkin of bone, which will vibrate when the rising seal sends ripples through the cold, dark water beneath. It requires much patience to watch these bodkins, since you can never be quite sure at which of several holes the seal will choose to refresh himself. Whenever he sees the slightest quiver, the Eskimo drives his harpoon-spear downward with all his force. After that, having secured the sinew-rope attached to the spear, he chips away the ice with a copper chisel until he can pull out his ' catch,' and when he takes it home to his little snow-house there is great joy, for every one likes the idea of seal-meat, and seal-soup, and new coats and rugs and hoods of seal-skin.

What do the Eskimos do for fresh water, when the only water for miles round is the salt water of the sea ? The question is a very natural one, and the answer is rather interesting. Frozen sea-water becomes quite fresh after a time. Autumn ice is bitter with brine, but during the winter the brine somehow loses its flavour, and by the spring that same ice is sweet and pure. So all that the Eskimo has to do is to chip off a chunk and melt it over his blubber-lamp.

The biggest animal that dwells on shore in Eskimo-land is the Polar bear. No one who has only seen a Polar bear in captivity can realize what an alarming creature he can be when he is at large. In his cage, or on his artificial rocks, or splashing about in his miniature pool, he looks like a huge, fluffy white toy, and his tiny, glistening dark eye, his tip-tilted black nose and his groping, flapping forepaws add to the

Book of Other Lands

quaintness of his appearance. But the case is altered when you and he are face to face in a desolate expanse of snow, and *you* have no rifle, and *he* happens to be hungry. The usual food of the Polar bear is seal-meat, but he has no objection to the flavour of human flesh, and when seals are scarce or shy, a plump Eskimo is very welcome. The coat of this bear looks more or less white against a background of grey or brown or green, but against the dazzling crystal whiteness of the snow it looks as yellow as honey. This is not the case with another dweller in the Arctic circle, the willow-ptarmigan, whose winter plumage is *really* white, and makes it almost invisible to the eye of the hunter.

Snow-blindness is one of the dangers and discomforts of Arctic life. Of course, until the coming of white men among them, the Eskimos had no such thing as glass with which to make 'goggles'; but they had—and still have—a rather ingenious substitute in the form of a pair of hollow pieces of wood with a narrow slit over each eye. Wood is very scarce in Eskimo-land, except in those districts where willows and spruce-firs grow. Near the sea-coast the Eskimos have to depend on driftwood, which is not altogether satisfactory. The spruce-firs that *do* grow in these cold regions near the top of the western hemisphere are just like the quaint, prickly trees which in Europe and America bear a crop of toys and candles on or about the twenty-fifth day of December. The Eskimo children, to whom these 'Christmas'-trees are quite familiar, have no idea of the delightful 'fruit' they bear in other parts of the world. For these children, unlike those of almost every land except theirs, have no toys at all. This does not mean that childhood is an unhappy time for them. Eskimo fathers and mothers are indulgent parents, and inclined to spoil their cheery, podgy little sons and daughters. When wood and leather and bone are so hard to come by, it naturally does not occur to the elders to make toy sledges, or toy harpoons, or dolls with tiny leather garments, for the amusement of the youngsters. There is no lack of amusement, for all that. And a full-sized sledge becomes a very good sort of toy when a small boy is allowed to take charge of the dog-team for a



FISHING FOR SMALL COD THROUGH A HOLE IN THE ICE

282

Photo E.N.A.



A TYPICAL ESKIMO FAMILY

Photo E.N.A.

Eskimo-land

little while. The sledge is usually set on two runners of wood or bone, though when both materials were more than usually scarce, frozen caribou-hide, or even frozen salmon, has been known to serve their purpose. It is used to bring home bear, caribou, and seal, as well as for travelling and 'household removals' when an Eskimo family changes quarters. Houses are so easily built and household goods are so few, the Eskimos think nothing of such removals, and soon settle themselves in again. They have no towns, and the small groups of snow-houses, or earth and leather huts, which sometimes gather together could hardly be dignified by the name of villages.



SLEDGE AND DOGS

Yet these people have a strong sense of kinship one with another. If a family is known to be short of food, all the other families round about will combine to make up the shortage from their own stores. Quarrels are almost unknown, and politeness is regarded as a most important virtue. This being so, it seems odd that the Eskimos have absolutely no words or phrases which correspond to our "How do you do?" and "Good-bye."

The usual formula when one Eskimo visits the hut of another is "I am So-and-So. I am coming in." Sometimes at departing they will say "*Inuudluaritse*," which means "Live well!" and to a white man, as he turns to leave the low-doored hut they exclaim anxiously "*Aporniakinatit*" (Do not bump your head). Formerly when two Greenland Eskimos met, they used, instead of shaking hands, to rub their noses together. But this quaint custom has fallen into disuse, except when petting small children.

Book of Other Lands

Without the aid of the white man's rifle an Eskimo cannot tackle a Polar bear, but *with* its aid, he is very glad to be able to get a shot at one, for a full-grown, well-nourished bear weighs about a thousand pounds, and provides the family with meat for quite a long time. The Eskimo is a tremendous eater. Two of them will polish off the flesh of a whole seal at one sitting! They do not like the flavour of salt, and they have never tasted either fruit or vegetables, though wild berries of various kinds are sometimes to be found in the shelter of the 'Christmas'-trees a little way inland.

Many of the Eskimos have been converted to Christianity by the missionaries who have dared the hardships of the Arctic circle in quest of such converts, but their Christianity is a rather vague and confused creed. For example, some Eskimos were told by a missionary that it was breaking one of God's commandments to fish with hooks on the Sabbath. He forgot, however, to explain that fishing with nets was no better, and so *his* Eskimos would faithfully abstain from using hooks on the seventh day while, at the same time, they fished freely with nets! Eskimos whom Christianity has not reached have, like most primitive people, a queer, shadowy belief in spirits, good and bad, and in magic. When a magic-man of their circle tells them that he has been on a journey to the moon, and describes his adventures there, it never occurs to them to doubt his word. About animals they have many curious ideas. One Eskimo will tell you that seals and whales and fishes are chipped out of fragments of wood by a wonderful magician, and 'come alive' as he drops them into the sea. Another will relate legends of the whale-spirit, a mighty and terrible force whom it is most important not to annoy in any way. Practically *all* Eskimos share the oddest belief of all—the belief that creatures such as bears and seals deliberately *allow* themselves to be killed by certain men, in return for certain services rendered to them after death. The seal, they say, is always thirsty, through living in the salt water. So a seal has not the faintest objection to being harpooned by a hunter who will afterward pour a little fresh water into his mouth. The hunter who never fails to do this acquires a good reputation among

Eskimo-land

the surviving seals, and they, in their turn, are quite pleased to be slain by him. Each animal has a soul, its *tatkok*, and in the case of the Polar bear, the *tatkok* accompanies the hunter to his hut and spends several days there. The bear does not, like the seal, crave a drink of fresh water. What *he* wants are curved knives and bow-drills, and Mrs Bear wants skin-scrapers and a case full of needles. (Exactly what she would *do* with the needles nobody has explained; but perhaps her *tatkok* makes ghostly garments for itself!) These tools have souls as well as the creatures who covet them. At the end of four or five days, during which the great, yellowy-white bearskin is hung up at the end of the hut, with the knives or needle-cases near it, a magic formula is uttered, and the *tatkok* of the dead bear departs, taking with it the *tatkok* of each gift which the hunter has offered it. When it becomes known among the Polar bears that a certain Eskimo is just and fair in his dealings with the *tatkok*, they are naturally anxious to be killed by such a well-behaved man!

The Eskimos themselves are very distrustful of other Eskimos living very far away, and firmly believe that the more remote their kinsfolk are, the more wicked they must be, and they and the Red Indians, the 'braves' who go on the war-path with tomahawks, are about equally afraid of each other. The Eskimo boy shudders at the thought of the terrible Indian; the Indian boy trembles at the idea of the fearful Eskimo. Every one has heard of the weird war-dances of the North-American Indians, danced by painted warriors with headdresses of bristling quills. The Eskimo hardly know the meaning of the word 'war,' but they have their own dances,



AN ESKIMO IN HOLIDAY DRESS

Book of Other Lands

peaceful dances, to the throbbing sound of a drum. For these dances they build special 'dance-halls' out of blocks of snow. The dances are mostly solos, accompanied by impromptu songs in which the dancer recounts his own achievements. Sometimes the feet are hardly moved at all, the 'dancing' being done with the hands and arms. Despite the lack of toys for the children, the elder Eskimos have balls, stuffed with caribou hair, and with these they play a sort of football, which is very good fun.

On Victoria Island, north of the Great Bear Lake and north-east of the Horton River, there dwells a tribe of Eskimos quite unlike any others. Nowhere else will you find an Eskimo with blue eyes and a well-cut nose! Until some sixteen years ago the existence of these people was practically unknown, and their origin is still a mystery. Perhaps they are descendants of the Viking colonists of Greenland. In the year 1000, Leif Eriksson sailed from Norway to visit his father, Erik the Red, in Greenland, but, sailing too far south, struck instead the coast of what we now call America. It was in the same year that Christianity was introduced into Greenland, and two centuries later the island had a bishopric and fourteen churches. These Viking colonists paid their dues to Rome in the form of walrus-ivory, and they also exported hides, oil, and wool. Eskimos had occupied Greenland before the coming of the Norsemen, but had retreated, for some unknown reason, to the American mainland. About the middle of the fourteenth century, however, they returned in great numbers to Greenland, and finally overwhelmed and wiped out the Christian settlers there. It seems not impossible that the blue-eyed Eskimos of Victoria Island are descendants of some far-wandering members of the Norse colony, but they themselves know not whence they came, nor why they should be more like the white men of the south than like their neighbours of the dark eyes and dusky skin.

CHAPTER XIV

SOUTH SEA ISLANDS

THE very word 'island' has a romantic sound. And, whether you imagine it surrounded by the fierce grey breakers of some northern sea or girt by coral reefs streaked with green and silver foam, the very *idea* of an island brings with it a vision of wonder, and achievement, and perilous enterprise. What boy would not thrill at the thought of discovering one and making it his own? Did not King Arthur betake himself to an island to be healed of his grievous wound, and St Brandan sail toward the sunset seeking the Isles of the Blest? If the good saint had been aboard Magellan's flagship when the great Portuguese explorer first beheld the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean in the year 1520, he would have found that those waters were dotted with isles and islets more gorgeously lovely than any son of the pale-tinted north could ever imagine. Like constellations of tangled stars, like drifts of daisy-buds, these groups of islands besprinkle the central and southern Pacific. North-west of the Coral Sea lie the mysterious lands of Papua and New Guinea, the homes of cannibals and head-hunters, who fish for pearls and pearl-shell in the intervals of their gruesome pursuits. West and south-west lie the kindlier isles of Fiji and Samoa, Tonga and Tahiti.

Most of the larger islands are of volcanic formation, rising into central peaks and ridges. Upon these peaks you may find dead craters, and crater-lakes, or craters that are only drowsy, and that give vigorous signs of life from time to time. The little isles are of coral, as are the barrier-reefs and the fringing reefs of their bigger neighbours. Scientists think that these atolls, as they are called, these circular coral isles, each enclosing a lagoon, have accumulated upon the mountain-tops of a long-submerged continent. A certain Mr Flinders

Book of Other Lands

(perhaps he was the father of "Little Polly" of the same surname), who visited the Pacific archipelagoes more than a hundred years ago, was much impressed by the varied beauty of the coral reefs. "The water being very clear," he wrote, "a new creation, as it was to us, but imitative of the old, was presented to our view. We had wheatsheaves, mushrooms, stag's horns, cabbage-leaves, and a variety of forms, glowing under the water with vivid tints of every shade betwixt green, purple, brown, and white." It will be observed that among the "vivid tints" which he so admired Mr Flinders does not mention *red*. And yet red is the colour which the word 'coral' suggests to our mind. You would seek in vain for red or pink coral among the atolls of the Pacific. It is found only in the Mediterranean, off Naples, Corsica, Sicily, Sardinia, Tunis, and Algiers. The ancient Romans, who set such store by red coral (which they called 'Gorgon's blood'), and which they used as a talisman to ward off ill-luck, little recked that anywhere in the world there were islands and reefs formed entirely of green and white coral, the green being alive, and the white, dead.

For a long time every one thought that this beautiful substance was a sort of marine plant, and that the starry buds with which it was studded were queer little flowers of the sea. When, in the eighteenth century, a French naturalist gave it as his opinion that these 'buds' were really animals, and that the branches of the 'plant' were colonies of these animals, people were either amused or annoyed at the wildness of his theory. Only by patient experiment and research were the facts established. And then coral was placed in the natural order of *Anthozoa*, flower-animals, to which the sea-anemones also belong. Dead coral is composed of the skeletons of various marine organisms and of deposits of carbonate of lime secreted by the tissues of the coral-polyps, sometimes called coral-insects, in life. Innumerable millions of dead polyps go to the formation of the atolls, which vary in breadth from one to ten miles, and may be anything up to ninety miles long.

Let us make the northernmost point of New Zealand our

South Sea Islands

“jumping-off place,” and, steering due north, let us sail till we sight the islands of Fiji. Well may all this part of the world be called Polynesia, “many islands”! The Fiji archipelago itself consists of one hundred and fifty, of which only about eighty are inhabited to-day. The two chief islands are called Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. To the leeward side of each stretch smooth expanses of emerald-green turf, beyond which lie groves of coconut palms and bread-fruit trees, and beyond these again dense masses of jungle



HOUSE OF A WEALTHY SAMOAN

clinging to the steep flanks of extinct volcanoes. Dotted about on this pleasant sward are native houses, with high thatched roofs. Some of these houses, especially those belonging to chiefs and other notable personages, are really beautiful. They are built of coconut palm-trunks, and the supporting beams inside are decorated with hundreds of yards of rope made from coconut fibre, which is wound tightly round them, and stained with various colours so as to make elaborate designs. On the floor are plaited mats of leaves, and the walls may be hung with a fabric called *tapa*, made from the fibre of the paper-mulberry, and painted black, white, and yellow. If the owner of the house be a very wealthy and

Book of Other Lands

important fellow, clusters of polished whale's teeth will be seen dangling upon his walls.

The Fijians are tall, fine-looking people, and as one of their national virtues is hospitality, they will certainly invite you into their houses and offer you a drink out of a coconut shell. Their crisp, fuzzy hair they wear brushed up into a big mop



A FIJIAN NATIVE DANCER

and bleached with lime. With clothing they burden themselves very little, the chief, indeed the only, garment of the men being a sort of kilt of *tapa*. The girls love to deck themselves with the great rose-coloured and sulphur-yellow flowers of the hibiscus plant, which flourishes in the volcanic soil, and sometimes attains a height of twenty feet. It is not yet a hundred years since the Fijians were cannibals. Human sacrifice once played a great part in their lives. When a chief built a new house, a living slave was buried beneath each of the four foundation-posts. They had a cheerful habit of killing off any relatives who seemed to them to be growing too old, but they assured the missionaries who arrived from Tonga in 1835 that this was done out of pure

affection for the victims, who would be far happier in the next world. Like all primitive people, the Polynesians had a lively faith in a future state, and such a fervent belief in the reality of unseen forces that they imagined almost every tree, bird, fish, and pool to be the abode of some god or spirit. It is curious that the Fijians, who are skilful craftsmen, wood-carvers, and boat-builders, and weavers of mats, should never have discovered for themselves the use of metals. Before steel and iron were introduced by white settlers, daily life in a Fiji village was almost exactly like that in a village of the Stone Age, far back in the dawn of history, before the Age of Bronze began. And

South Sea Islands

the mind of prehistoric man was probably like the mind of a typical Polynesian. He, too, saw or felt a god in every tree and stone; he, too, sought to flatter his gods by sacrificing to them his fellow-men; he, too, lapsed sometimes into cannibalism, and fell to the level of the lower beasts.

The greatest delicacy ever enjoyed at a Fijian banquet in the old days was "Long Pig." In preparing this 'course,' a herb of the *Solanum* family was always used, as the company believed that without it they would not be able to digest the repast. The scientific name of this particular herb tells us, when we understand, what was the *real* name of the "Long Pig." *Solanum anthropophagorum* it is called—cannibal's nightshade! And they used it in cooking human flesh, to ward off possible tummy-aches afterward. "Long Pig" has ceased to be a Fijian delicacy now, but the problem of what to give the children for their dinner is easily solved in those kindly isles, where delicious fruits grow on every side, and you need only stretch forth your hand when you feel hungry. There are no bakers in Fiji, for the bread grows on trees there. At the top of the slender trunks, forty or fifty feet high, among bunches of long, glossy, dark-green leaves, hang the 'loaves.' They are oval in form, about the size of a child's head, and each weighs from three to four pounds. The pulp is enclosed in a rather rough rind marked all over with square or lozenge-shaped divisions, and this rind is first of all green, then brown, and finally a glowing golden-yellow. It is in the middle, or brown, stage of its development that the bread-fruit tastes best. The Polynesians, when they want some 'bread,' dig a hole in the earth and put some heated stones in the bottom; these they cover with a layer of leaves, and upon the leaves they lay portions of the white, mealy pulp of the fruit; then they add more stones, more leaves, and more pulp, until the hole is almost full, when several inches of earth are spread on the top. Half-an-hour later the 'loaves' are ready, brownish-gold on the outside and warm and spongy within. From the bark of the same useful tree exudes a sticky fluid which the Polynesians find helpful in various ways—as bird-lime, and to make the seams of their

Book of Other Lands

canoes water-tight. The canoes themselves are often built of bread-fruit timber, which is the colour of light mahogany, but is useless for house-building, as it does not stand exposure to rain and wind. Bananas, coconuts, sugar-canes, and lemons flourish in the rich volcanic soil, and in the dense jungle no fierce beasts lurk. Small, gaily hued parrots flicker and squabble among the trails of flowering lianas. Even the pigeons have put on gaudy attire, and sport plumage of greenish gold and dusky crimson. They seem reluctant to be outshone by the gorgeous flowers among which they live—mimosas, tree-orchids, and hibiscus blooms. The Fijians are not pure-blooded Polynesians, but have in their veins a Melanesian strain, that is to say, a kinship with the wilder and more savage races of the western Pacific. Their fuzzy locks, their affection for "Long Pig," and their fierce religious rites were all traces of their descent from the head-hunters and pearl-fishers of the West. On the other hand, they are intelligent, skilful with their fingers, fond of music, and—a sure sign of advanced development—fond of a joke. They have a national poetry, full of fantastic legends about men and gods and beasts, and though, of course, this poetry cannot be called *literature*, it follows certain metrical laws, and has sound-resemblances which are something like what we mean by "rhyme." Fijian etiquette is a most elaborate matter, and it is well to know beforehand in what way their idea of politeness differs from our own. In Fiji, it is a sign of respect to remain seated in the presence of a superior. When addressing a chief, or some one of superior rank, either the plural number or the third person should be used. As a sign of mourning, a chief will sometimes cut off the tip of his little finger, or, if his grief is less violent and his anxiety to please the family of the dead man less keen, he will cut off the fingertip of one of his servants. If a notable should stumble or fall, every one present must stumble or fall also, without delay.

All Polynesians who are not Christians, and a good many who *are*, believe that trees and stones are the abodes of mysterious unseen forces, and that each family has its own household gods. These household gods assume all sorts of



A NATIVE HOME AT TAHITI

Photo E.N.A



NATIVES OF SAMOA PREPARING FOR A FEAST

Photo E.N.A.

South Sea Islands

forms. While one dwells in an octopus, a sandpiper or a shark, another may choose to reside in the left wing of a pigeon, or the hind-leg of a pig! If the god of a certain family should take the form of an edible animal, it is considered a very serious matter for a member of that family to eat the flesh of the creature. Even if he sinned by pure accident, dreadful things might happen to him: all his fuzzy hair might suddenly fall out, or he might wake up some morning with a violent squint. To avert the wrath of the god, the other members of the family used to pretend to roast him alive—but in a cold oven!

There is at least one Polynesian word which has crept into the everyday language of English-speaking people, and that is "taboo." The original form was *tapu*, or *tabu*, and it meant both sacred and untouchable. The primitive Polynesian was hedged round by taboos, and required constant instruction from his magic-men, or priests, as to what he might or might not touch, or eat, or look at, or do. The chiefs and the magic-men seem to have invented some of these rules for their own protection. For example, the body of the chief himself was taboo, and it was a sin for any man to lay his hand upon it. Also, newly sprung crops were taboo, until the chief had had his share. In Fiji, where most of the people are now Wesleyan Methodists, these beliefs and customs are dying out, but they survive and flourish in some of the remoter archipelagoes, such as the Marquesan islands.

The chiefs of Fiji form a *real* aristocracy, that is to say, a ruling class drawn from the best elements in the nation. Their skins are a lighter shade of brown, their features are more handsome, they are more gifted and more skilful with their hands than the rest of the people. In their thatched houses, among their painted tapu-hangings, they will receive strangers with generous and charming hospitality. If due honour is to be paid to the guest, he will certainly be offered a draught of *kava*, and if he has seen the way in which this characteristic Polynesian beverage is prepared, or if he does not happen to like its queer taste—which has been compared to that of pepper, rhubarb, soap-suds, and Gregory's mixture!—he will

Book of Other Lands

require all his courage in order to empty the coconut-shell goblet at one gulp. Yet if he were to show any hesitation, or if he were to drink slowly, a sip at a time, his hosts would be deeply hurt.

Kava is made from the root of the plant known to botanists as *Piper methysticum* (intoxicating pepper). Nowadays it is usually crushed between stones, but when it is to be prepared for some honoured guest the old fashion may be revived, and the ancient ceremonial may be observed in his presence. Three or four young girls, specially chosen on account of their



SAMOAN GIRLS MAKING KAVA

beautiful teeth and specially adorned with necklaces of shells and berries and garlands of hibiscus-flowers, seat themselves round a deep wooden bowl. The inner side of the kava-bowl has usually a shimmering surface, like the finest enamel, as the result of the chemical action of the root through many years of kava-making. When all is ready, the girls begin to crush the roots between their teeth and then, as each portion is reduced to shreds, to drop them from their lips into the bowl. A sufficient quantity having been crushed in this rather startling manner, pure water is poured over the shredded fibres, and then strained with bunches of hibiscus-bark, and the kava is ready. Instead of cups or goblets, half-shells of the coconut are used, and as each of these holds about a quart, "a long pull and a strong pull" is needed to empty one at a single draught. A maiden approaches the guest of honour with a brimming shell held high above her

South Sea Islands

head, then, halting before him, she brings it down with a graceful sweep to the level of his knees, when he takes it from her, and proceeds, with enthusiasm or with desperation as the case may be, to drink the contents. In spite of its scientific name, kava is much less intoxicating than the rum and other strong beverages introduced into Polynesia by white men, and the worst effect it can possibly have upon the reveller who drinks it too freely is to temporarily paralyse his legs. An English peer has thus recorded his first experience of kava-drinking: "I waited patiently for all sorts of effects, mental and physical, but none came; I might as well have drunk half a bottle of flat ginger-beer, for that matter."

North-east of Fiji lies a group of fourteen islands, forming a slightly curved chain from west by north to east by south, to which the French explorer Bougainville, the first Frenchman to sail right round the world, gave the name of Navigators' Islands, but which we know better by their native name of Samoa. For various reasons Upolu is the most interesting of the group, and it is there, in the harbour of Apia, that the traveller will do well to land. Upolu is long and narrow, and has a backbone of jagged mountains whose flanks are draped with rich forest, giant tree-ferns, striped and speckled tree-orchids, coconut palms and bread-fruit groves. The harbour at Apia is shaped like a bow, of which the 'string' is a coral-reef where the waves break into lovely silver streaks of foam. On a hot day, when the palms seem too bright a green and the sky too bright a blue, it is pleasant to watch the flash of the breakers on the reef, and to hear their rhythmic throb and hiss as they climb, and cleave, and fall. Inside the reef, between the low- and high-water mark, is the famous coral-garden, one of the wonders of the South Seas. At low water, the coral



A WOMAN CHIEF
OF SAMOA

Book of Other Lands

is a dull green, and the seaweeds and sea-anemones look like dingy threads and blobs of dusky jelly. But if you take a boat at high water, and gaze down through the crystal-clear depths, you will see the coral-garden in all its fantastic loveliness. The 'flowers' are corals, anemones, and seaweeds, and their forms and colours are bewildering in their variety. The water magnifies them as you gaze down, and it seems as though the branching clumps of coral were leafless trees, and the wide-open anemones great lilies and daisies and dahlias, purple, crimson, palest pink, all smudged and blurred with vague, nameless, undersea hues. Among these 'trees' and 'flowers' dart lively little fishes, pale blue and pale green, while in the gently swaying weeds on the sea-bed prickly starfish and sea-urchins take their ease.

Twice a year there is a scene of fearful excitement in the harbour at Apia. This is when the polulu-worm suddenly makes its appearance in vast numbers, and the eager natives launch quite a fleet of canoes in order to scoop up masses of the creatures in calabash-shells, or any other receptacle that comes handy. The polulu is very regular and exact in its habits, so the Samoans know just when it is likely to pay them a visit, and are all ready for it when it comes. They launch their canoes before dawn, for the polulu vanishes whenever the sun is above the horizon. All sorts of queer things beside calabashes are used to 'fish' with—pieces of matting, muslin bags stretched on bent cane after the manner of a butterfly-net, shovels, buckets, and wooden bowls. Samoans esteem the polulu as much as the Fijians used to esteem "Long Pig," and when it is baked between banana-leaves its flavour is said to resemble that of spinach and crab.

The best type of Polynesian is to be found in the island of Samoa, a light-brown type, with regular features and abundant straight hair, free from any admixture of the less-refined Melanesian stock. Their language has been called the Italian of the Pacific on account of its beautiful liquid sound. A Samoan village consists of an irregular group of thatched houses dotted about on green turf under the shelter of coconut palms. One startling peculiarity about the Samoan house

South Sea Islands

is that it has absolutely no walls. It is simply a steep roof, thatched with leaves and supported upon four corner-poles of coconut wood. When it rains—and rain in Samoa has been compared to a torrent of crystal rods—screens of plaited coconut fibre are placed between the corner-posts; but in fine weather all the villagers cook and eat and sleep in full view of the world—and of each other. Each of the sea-coast villages is girdled with a four-foot fence, to keep the pigs from straying. Pigs are popular in Samoa, but they seem to have a roving disposition there, and great efforts are necessary to restrain them. The presence of these restless porkers very nearly resulted in the complete disappearance of a Samoan ground-pigeon of the dodo family. The poor bird was so grievously harried by the pigs that it had almost become extinct, like its larger cousin, the dodo, when, to the astonishment of the naturalists, it abandoned its hereditary custom of nesting on the ground and began to build its nest in the trees, out of the reach of its grunting persecutors. Since then it is said to have multiplied so much that there is now little danger of its dying out.

Pigeons abound in the lovely wooded gorges of Upolu, and their drowsy cooing mingles with the gurgling and splashing of waterfalls. The pools into which these silver cascades descend are full of gaily coloured fishes, little fellows with vivid yellow tails and fins, and larger ones, purple and crimson, of the crayfish tribe.

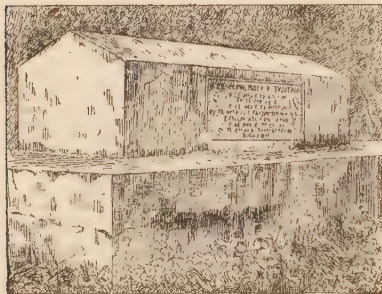
Though the Samoans, like the rest of the Polynesian islanders, wear hardly anything except loin-cloths of tapa, they are very particular about their appearance, and anoint their lithe, graceful brown limbs with abundance of coconut oil. They bleach their hair with coral-lime, and adorn it with



NATIVE SAMOAN WOMAN
AND CHILD

Book of Other Lands

shells, berries, flowers, and tufts of plummy grasses. Round their necks both men and women wear strings of highly polished beans. Dancing is one of their favourite pastimes, and many of their dances are dramatic, representing actions and even events. One such dance, for example, shows fishermen at work, netting and spearing fish ; another shows the rescue of a youth from a mad dog ; another, a quarrel between two warriors for the hand of the village beauty. Perhaps the



THE GRAVE OF ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON

quaintest of the many quaint things to be seen in Polynesia is the nose-flute, a musical instrument which is held to the nostrils instead of to the lips of the player. All Polynesians are intensely fond of music, and the Christian converts delight in singing the familiar tunes of *Hymns A. and M.*, the words being translated into their own language.

To many people the most interesting thing about Upolu is that it was the last home of Robert Louis Stevenson. Far from the grey north that he loved so well, with the murmur of the red-plumed pigeons in his ears instead of the weird cry of the whaups, R.L.S. spent the closing years of his too brief life. His house, Vailima, has become a place of pilgrimage now. Nobody would think of visiting Samoa without climbing Mount Væa, and standing by the grave of one of the greatest and best-loved men of letters of the later nineteenth century.

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie,
Glad did I live, and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me :
" Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

South Sea Islands

Who that has ever read Stevenson's own epitaph upon himself could forget its quiet courage and its beautiful images and cadences? The Samoans loved "Tusitala," the teller of tales, and they found in him a sturdy champion against certain very different white men who sought to deal unjustly by them. As a token of their gratitude, they cleared and dug and levelled a road to his house, a road to which Stevenson gave the name of the Road of Gratitude. Passionately though he loved his northern home, R.L.S. was not unhappy among the forest-shagged, torrent-haunted mountains of Upolu. And it seems fitting, somehow, that an island should be the last resting-place of him who wrote *Treasure Island*, and dreamed the stirring tale of Long John Silver, and stout-hearted Jim, and the gruesome quest of Old Pew.

Three hundred and fifty miles south-south-west of Samoa lies a chain of islands upon which Captain Cook, in a moment of enthusiasm, and in recognition of the politeness of the natives, bestowed the name of the Friendly Islands. He was not the first white man to sight this archipelago, for Abel Tasman the Dutch explorer reached the largest island, Tongatabu (Tonga the sacred), in 1643, and, like the loyal Dutchman that he was, dubbed it Amsterdam.

Tonga is interesting for various reasons. It was the original home of the *Piper methysticum*, and some scientific people think it was also the original home of all the Polynesian races, who spread thence on to the various groups of volcanic isles and coral atolls now inhabited by their descendants. The scenery is rich, but, by contrast with the more craggy and mountainous outlines of Fiji and Samoa, seems a little flat and uneventful. Ferns and tree-ferns, palms, orchids, and gardenias abound. The smaller islets are volcanic, and some of them rise to central peaks that are still active at times. Earthquakes occur rather frequently, and the islets appear and disappear in a startling manner, to the confusion of mariners and makers of maps. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century there were some especially violent upheavals, and a totally new island rose above the waves. Scarcely had it been christened with the name

Book of Other Lands

of " Wesley " than it hurriedly subsided into the depths of the sea.

The approach to Tonga at daybreak is thus described by a traveller from New Zealand : " Just under the red sunrise on the starboard bow, silhouetted against a pale, yellow-green sky, stand, as it were right out of the ocean, the feathery tops of the coconut trees, and nearer, *puff, puff, puff*, one after another, stretching almost a mile along the horizon, like shells fired from a line of forts and exploding in the water, leap twenty feet into the air little heaps of white spray. These are the waves breaking over a line of coral rocks."

Near the village of Afa, to the east of Tonga-tabu, is an imposing trilith, formed of two upright stones sixteen feet high and thirteen feet wide, supporting a horizontal stone twenty feet long and five feet high. Nobody knows by whom they were hewn and set up ; there are no stones of the same kind elsewhere in Tonga, and according to an ancient tradition they were brought many centuries since from the island of Fortuna, and once formed the portals of the royal palace of the " Tuitonga," the king of the isle. The size of the stones recalls the mysterious images which explorers have found on the arid speck of volcanic earth known as Easter Island.¹ One of these images may now be seen at the British Museum, and an expedition of scientists has recently made a fresh effort to solve the mystery—but in vain. All that can be guessed is that the more remote islands of the Pacific were peopled in prehistoric times by an energetic and gifted race whose ideas of temple-building were similar to theirs who built Stonehenge, and who had learned how to mortise huge blocks without using cement. It is conjectured that a mighty earthquake, followed by a huge tidal-wave, overwhelmed these islanders hundreds of years ago, and that no descendant of theirs can be found anywhere in the Pacific to-day.

The Tongans are a handsome and intelligent people, but, most unfortunately, they have an exaggerated opinion of their own merits. They consider themselves the finest fellows in the whole world, the pearls of the human race, and they are

¹ See *The Book of Discovery*, by T. C. Bridges.

South Sea Islands

quite annoyed if anybody seems to doubt it! They excel as boat-builders, navigators, wood-workers, and mat-makers, but their intelligence is nimble rather than solid, and it will often be found that a Tongan boy in a mission college will acquire mathematics more easily than plain grammar and spelling, and the art of stenography before the humdrum art of writing long-hand!

Here, as elsewhere in Polynesia, nature bestows her bounties on humanity with a generous hand. Bread-fruit and coconut trees abound, and among them are the pawpaw, or mummy-apple, and the vanilla-bean, which actually belongs to the orchid family, and has waxen-looking white flowers, in form and tint not unlike the familiar *Harrisii* lily.

Almost due east of Tonga lies a group of islands which was first sighted by European eyes when Pedro Fernandez Quirus penetrated the Pacific in the year 1607. Just one hundred and sixty years later an English adventurer, Samuel Wallis, set foot upon Tahiti, the principal island of the group, and, like a loyal Englishman, named it after King George III. But it was destined to bear the name of that well-meaning though not remarkably brilliant monarch for one year only. In 1768 our old friend Louis de Bougainville cast anchor there, and was so much charmed by its forest-clad peaks, its rainbow-plumed parrots, its gorgeous orchids and gigantic ferns, that he romantically christened it "*La Nouvelle Cythère*," thinking that the fabled dwelling of the goddess of love and beauty could hardly have been more beautiful. This name also was soon replaced by another. In 1769 the Royal Society of London sent out a scientific expedition, under Captain Cook, to observe the transit of the planet Venus across the sun's disc from some convenient spot in the South Seas. Cook calmly dubbed the group the Society Islands, after the Royal Society, and so they have been called ever since.

The arrival of white men among these gorgeous archipelagoes inevitably led to the annexation of many of the islands by European Powers, and the exploitation—sometimes for their own good, and sometimes *not*—of the natives. The Society Islands are now under the French flag, Fiji has

Book of Other Lands

been a British Colony since 1874, and Tonga a British Protectorate since 1900, while Samoa, for some years a German outpost, was made a mandated territory after the Great War, and confided to the care of the Government of New Zealand.

The Tahitian chieftains whom the earlier French and British explorers encountered must have been most imposing fellows. They used then to wear short cloaks woven out of feathers and semicircular breastplates made of sharks' teeth, scarlet plumes, and the black quills of the long-winged frigate-bird. Their priests sported wickerwork hats of cylindrical form no less than one yard high. The ancient religion of the Tahitians was a fierce and cruel one, and most of the solemn ceremonies were associated with human sacrifice. At Atahura there was formerly a stone-built temple 270 feet long, 94 feet wide and 50 feet high, of which the pyramidal summit was reached by a flight of steps hewn out of coral and basalt. In such temples as this the chieftains were buried, but their heads, as is still the case in Melanesia, were preserved in the houses of their kinsfolk and friends.

In one respect the people of Tahiti lagged behind the people of the Stone Age. They had no pottery. Food was roasted over an open fire, or baked in holes dug in the earth, as the bread-fruit is still baked in Fiji. For cups they had the ever-useful coconut shell. Yet these same people, who had never thought of moulding goblets and jars out of mud, were skilful boat-builders, some of their canoes being as much as 70 feet long. The high-curved prows of these canoes were adorned with images of gods and hung with brilliant feathers, and the men who steered them were guided by the stars, and had learned to recognize many constellations.

In the South Seas two creatures, one on land and one on sea, can be seen hurtling through the air with outspread 'wings,' creatures that we think of rather as either climbing trees or swimming, and whom we are at first rather surprised to see in the air. These are the so-called 'flying foxes,' and the 'flying' fish. Of course, neither of them can fly as a bird flies. The 'fox' is a member of the bat family, and, with the aid of the membrane connecting his forefeet with his hind-

South Sea Islands

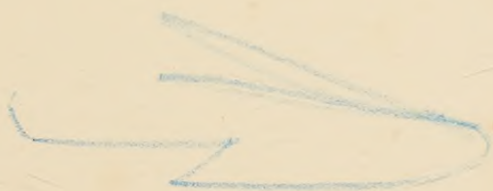
feet on either side, he is able to make what aviators call a *vol plané*; in the case of the fish, the pectoral fins are so elongated as to sustain it for some time in the air when it makes one of its wild leaps out of the water. As your ship draws near Papeete, the capital of the Society Islands, shoals of dolphins play round the bows, and brightly coloured fishes hurl themselves on to the deck, or even into the arms of the passengers.

The little town of Papeete is refreshing to eyes wearied with the blue monotony of the sea. It has no imposing buildings, but its streets are cool and shady, planted with double rows of spreading trees. Many tongues are heard, French, Chinese, German, and English—this last very often with a strong Scottish accent. A French warship, flying the tricolour, is usually at anchor in the bay, and a small garrison of French soldiers is stationed in the town. Beyond, where the central ridge of the island rises to the great peak of Orohena, 7200 feet high, there are vast tracts of virgin forest, dense groves never trodden by the foot of man. Certainly no Tahitian foot is anxious to tread their dusky green depths, for the natives of this romantic isle are an amazingly easy-going people, quite content to live on bread-fruit and bananas, and to believe that there are lovely lakes and silver waterfalls in the interior of their home without ever wanting to go and see for themselves. They are not too lazy, however, to swim and dive with extraordinary vigour and grace for hours together, or to go out sometimes and spear fish by torchlight from a coral-reef. At low tide the pools of a reef are often swarming with a plump fish of the mackerel tribe called a *bonito*. The water is so marvellously clear that when a torch is held above one of these pools the fisherman can see right down into the depths, where turquoise-blue and malachite-green and poppy-red fishes flicker to and fro among beds of starry purple and rose-tinted anemones that look like unearthly flowers. Much skill is required, a firm wrist and a quick eye, to strike the spear downward into this sea-garden and transfix the fat bonito lurking there.

The harbour of Papeete is a delightful scene in the fresh

Book of Other Lands

hours of early morning, when the sun gilds the quaint crags of Orohena, and the quay is gay with the blue-and-red, flower-patterned garments of the natives. From the thatched huts beyond the white walls of the French town comes a blithe crowing of cocks, and from the spire of the French church a bell rings softly to say that it is the hour of prayer. There is, indeed, an unmistakable French touch about Papeete, where one of the shady streets is called the Rue de Rivoli, and a native band discourses French operatic music from a circular bandstand, and French sailors, with their pompoms on their caps and their striped jumpers, move here and there among the coffee-coloured Tahitians in their gaudy cotton kilts. From this far-off, fantastic outpost of France many a French tar takes home little trifles that fill the children of his native Brittany or Normandy with wonder. In the granite-walled kitchen of a Breton cottage, between a plaster image of St Anne d'Auray and a fading photograph of some fisherman-son lost at sea off Iceland, you will see the fretted white sprigs of coral, the strings of polished beans, the clusters of bright shells, brought over many miles of land and water by a sailor-son proud to adorn his mother's humble grey dwelling with the gorgeous spoils of the South Seas.



BOROUGH OF DARWEN

